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THE SMART SET



A
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"**LA VOC,**"
the Latest
and Most
interesting Novel
yet Produced by
A. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM,
begins in This Number—
with

AN ENLARGEMENT OF THE MAGAZINE.

LONDON

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The Smart Set for October

You observe, of course, that you're getting more magazine for your money this month.

A lot of people wanted a big serial story. This was against the old established policy of the SMART SET—which was to have each issue complete in itself.

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"**Other Women's Husbands**"—there's a feature that will strike home! **Phillipa Lyman's** essay on this subject is delightful—it will open your eyes, perhaps.

And that's not all!

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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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HAVOC

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

BELLAMY, king's spy, and Dorward, journalist, known to fame in every English speaking country, stood before the double window of their spacious sitting room, looking down upon the thoroughfare beneath. Both men were laboring under a bitter sense of failure. Bellamy's face was dark with forebodings; Dorward was irritated and nervous. Failure was a new thing to him—a thing which those behind the great journals which he represented understood less, even, than he. Bellamy loved his country and fear was gnawing at his heart.

Below, the densely packed crowds which had been waiting patiently for many hours broke into a tumult of welcoming voices. Down their thickly packed lines the volume of sound rose and grew, a faint murmur at first, swelling and growing to a thundering roar. Myriads of hats were suddenly torn from the heads of the excited multitude; handkerchiefs waved from every window. It was a wonderful greeting, this.

"The Czar, on his way to the railway station," Bellamy remarked.

The broad avenue was suddenly thronged with a mass of soldiery—guardsmen of the most famous of Austrian regiments, brilliant in their white uniforms, their flashing helmets. The small brougham with its great black horses was almost hidden within a ring of naked steel. Dorward, an American to the backbone and a bitter democrat, thrust out his under lip.

"The Anointed of the Lord!" he muttered.

Far away from some other quarter

came the same roar of voices, muffled yet insistent, charged with that faint exciting timbre which seems always to live in the cry of the multitude.

"The Emperor," declared Bellamy. "He goes to the West Station."

The commotion had passed. The crowds in the street below were on the move, melting away now with a muffled trampling of feet and a murmur of voices. The two men turned from their window back into the room. Dorward commenced to roll a cigarette with yellow-stained, nervous fingers, while Bellamy threw himself into an easy chair with a gesture of depression.

"So it is over, this long talked-of meeting," he said, half to himself, half to Dorward. "It is over, and Europe is left to wonder."

"They were together for scarcely more than an hour," Dorward murmured.

"Long enough," Bellamy answered. "That little room in the Palace, my friend, may yet become famous."

"If you and I could buy its secrets," Dorward remarked, finally shaping a cigarette and lighting it, "we should be big bidders, I think. I'd give fifty thousand dollars myself to be able to cable even a hundred words of their conversation."

"For the truth," Bellamy said, "the whole truth, there could be no price sufficient. We made our effort in different directions, both of us. With infinite pains I planted—I may tell you this now that the thing is over—seven spies in the Palace. They have been as much use as rabbits. I don't believe a single one of them got any farther than the kitchens."

Dorward nodded gloomily.

"I guess they weren't taking any chances up there," he remarked. "There wasn't a secretary in the room. Carstairs was nearly thrown out, and he had a permit to enter the Palace. The great staircase was held with soldiers, and Dick swore that there were Maxims in the corridors."

Bellamy sighed.

"We shall hear the roar of bigger guns before we are many months older, Dorward," he declared.

The journalist glanced at his friend keenly. "You believe that?"

Bellamy shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you suppose that this meeting is for nothing?" he asked. "When Austria, Germany and Russia stand whispering in a corner, can't you believe it is across the North Sea that they point? Things have been shaping that way for years, and the time is almost ripe."

"You English are too nervous to live, nowadays," Dorward declared impatiently. "I'd just like to know what they said about America."

Bellamy smiled with faint but delicate irony.

"Without a doubt, the Prince will tell you," he said. "He can scarcely do more to show his regard for your country. He is giving you a special interview—you alone out of about two hundred journalists. Very likely he will give you an exact account of everything that transpired. First of all, he will assure you that this meeting has been brought about in the interests of peace. He will tell you that the welfare of your dear country is foremost in the thoughts of his master. He will assure you—"

"Say, you're jealous, my friend," Dorward interrupted calmly. "I wonder what you'd give me for my ten minutes alone with the Chancellor, eh?"

"If he told me the truth," Bellamy asserted, "I'd give my life for it. For the sort of stuff you're going to hear I'd give nothing. Can't you realize that for yourself, Dorward? You know the man—false as hell but with the tongue of a serpent. He will grasp

your hand; he will declare himself glad to speak through you to the great Anglo-Saxon races—to England and to his dear friends the Americans. He is only too pleased to have the opportunity of expressing himself candidly and openly. Peace is to be the watchword of the future. The white doves have hovered over the Palace. The rulers of the earth have met that the crash of arms may be stilled and that this terrible unrest which broods over Europe shall finally be broken up. They have pledged themselves hand in hand to work together for this object—Russia, broken and humiliated, but with an immense army still available, whose only chance of holding her place among the nations is another and a successful war; Austria, on fire for the seaboard—Austria, to whom war would give the desire of her existence; Germany, with Bismarck's last but secret words written in letters of fire on the walls of her palaces, in the hearts of her rulers, in the brain of her great Emperor. Colonies! Expansion! Empire! Whose colonies, I wonder? Whose empire? Will he tell you that, my friend Dorward?"

The journalist shrugged his shoulders and glanced at the clock.

"I guess he'll tell me what he chooses, and I shall print it," he answered indifferently. "It's all part of the game, of course. I am not exactly chicken enough to expect the truth. All the same, my message will come from the lips of the Chancellor immediately after this wonderful meeting."

"He makes use of you," Bellamy declared, "to throw dust into our eyes and yours."

"Even so," Dorward admitted, "I don't care so long as I get the copy. It's good-bye, I suppose?"

Bellamy nodded.

"I shall go on to Berlin, perhaps, tomorrow," he said. "I can do no more good here. And you?"

"After I've sent my cable I'm off to Belgrade for a week, at any rate," Dorward answered. "I hear the women are forming rifle clubs all through Servia."

Bellamy smiled thoughtfully. "I know one who'll want a place among the leaders," he murmured.

"Mademoiselle Idiale, I suppose?"

Bellamy assented.

"It's a queer position, hers, if you like," he said. "All Vienna raves about her. They throng the Opera House every night to hear her sing, and they pay her the biggest salary which has ever been known here. Three parts of it she sends to Belgrade to the Chief of the Committee for National Defense. The jewels that are sent her anonymously go to the same place, all to buy arms to fight these people who worship her. I tell you, Dorward," he added, rising to his feet and walking to the window, "the patriotism of these people is something we colder races scarcely understand. Perhaps it is because we have never dwelt under the shadow of a conqueror. If ever Austria is given a free hand, it will be no mere war upon which she enters—it will be a carnage, an extermination!"

Dorward looked once more at the clock and rose slowly to his feet.

"Well," he said, "I mustn't keep His Excellency waiting. Good-bye, and cheer up, Bellamy! Your old country isn't going to turn up her heels yet."

Out he went, long, lank, uncouth, with yellow-stained fingers and hatchet-shaped, gray face, a strange figure but yet a power. Bellamy remained. For a while he seemed doubtful how to pass the time. He stood in front of the window, watching the dispersal of the crowds and the marching by of a regiment of soldiers, whose movements he followed with critical interest, for he, too, had been in the service. He had still a military bearing—tall, and with complexion inclined to be dusky, a small black mustache, dark eyes, a silent mouth, a man of many reserves. Even his intimates knew little of him. Nevertheless, his was the reticence which befitted well his profession.

After a time he sat down and wrote some letters. He had just finished

when there came a sharp tap at the door. Before he could open his lips someone had entered. He heard the soft swirl of draperies and turned sharply round, then sprang to his feet and held out both his hands. There was expression in his face now—as much as he ever suffered to appear there.

"Louise!" he exclaimed. "What good fortune!"

She held his fingers for a moment in a manner which betokened a more than common intimacy. Then she threw herself into an easy chair and raised her thick veil. Bellamy looked at her for a moment in sorrowful silence. There were violet lines underneath her beautiful eyes; her cheeks were destitute of any color. There was an abandonment of grief about her attitude which moved him. She sat as one broken-spirited, in whom the power of resistance was dead.

"It is over, then," she said softly, "this meeting. The word has been spoken."

He came over and stood by her side.

"As yet," he reminded her, "we do not know what that word may be."

She shook her head mournfully.

"Who can doubt?" she exclaimed. "For myself, I feel it in the air! I can see it in the faces of the people who throng the city! I can hear it in the peals of those awful bells! You know nothing? You have heard nothing?"

Bellamy shook his head.

"I did all that was humanly possible," he said, dropping his voice. "An Englishman in Vienna today has very little opportunity. I filled the Palace with spies, but they hadn't a dog's chance. There wasn't even a secretary present. The Czar, the two Emperors and the Chancellor—not another soul was in the room."

"If only Von Behrling had been taken!" she exclaimed. "He was there in reserve, I know, as stenographer. I have but to lift my hand and it is enough. I would have had the truth from him, whatever it cost me."

Bellamy looked at her thoughtfully. It was not for nothing that the press

of every European nation had called her the most beautiful woman in the world. He frowned slightly at her last words, for he loved her.

"Von Behrling was not even allowed to cross the threshold," he said sharply.

She moved her head and looked up at him. She was leaning a little forward now, her chin resting upon her hands. Something about the lines of her long, supple body suggested to him the savage animal crouching for a spring. She was quiet, but her bosom was heaving, and he could guess at the passion within. With purpose he spoke to set it loose.

"You sing tonight?" he asked.

"Before God, no!" she answered, the anger blazing out of her eyes, shaking in her voice. "I sing no more in this accursed city!"

"There will be a revolution," Bellamy remarked. "I see that the whole city is placarded with notices. It is to be a gala night at the Opera. The royal party is to be present."

Her body seemed to quiver like a tree shaken by the wind.

"What do I care—I—I—for their gala night? If I were like Samson, if I could pull down the pillars of their Opera House and bury them all in its ruins, I would do it!"

He took her hand and smoothed it in his. "Dear Louise, it is useless, this. You do everything that can be done for your country."

Her eyes were streaming and her fingers sought his.

"My friend David," she said, "you do not understand. None of you English yet can understand what it is to crouch in the shadow of this black fear, to feel a tyrant's hand come creeping out, to know that your life blood and the life blood of all your people must be shed and shed in vain. To rob a nation of their liberty, ah, it is worse, this, than murder—a worse crime than his who stains the soul of a poor innocent girl! It is a sin against Nature herself!"

She was sobbing now, and she clutched his hands passionately.

"Forgive me," she murmured; "I

am overwrought. I have borne up against this thing so long. I can do no more good here. I come to tell you that I go away till the time comes. I go to your London. They want me to sing for them there. I shall do it."

"You will break your engagement?"

She laughed at him scornfully.

"I am Idiale," she declared. "I keep no engagement if I do not choose. I will sing no more to this people whom I hate. My friend David, I have suffered enough. Their applause I loathe—their covetous eyes as they watch me move about the stage—oh, I could strike them all dead! They come to me, these young Austrian noblemen, as though I were already one of a conquered race. I keep their diamonds but I destroy their messages. Their jewels go to my chorus girls or to arm my people. But no one of them has had a kind word from me save where there has been something to be gained. Even Von Behrling I have fooled with promises. No Austrian shall ever touch my lips—I have sworn it!"

Bellamy nodded.

"Yes," he assented, "they call you cold here in the capital. Even in the Palace—"

She held out her hand. "It is finished!" she declared. "I sing no more. I have sent word to the Opera House. I came here to be in hiding for a while. They will search for me everywhere. Tonight or tomorrow I leave for England."

Bellamy stood thoughtfully silent.

"I am not sure that you are wise," he said. "You take it too much for granted that the end has come."

"And do you not yourself believe it?" she demanded.

He hesitated. "As yet there is no proof," he reminded her.

"Proof!" She sat upright in her chair. Her hands thrust him from her; her bosom heaved; a spot of color flared in her cheeks.

"Proof!" she cried. "What do you suppose, then, that these wolves have plotted for? What else do you suppose could be Austria's share of the feast? Couldn't you hear our fate in the thun-

der of their voices when that miserable monarch rode back to his captivity? We are doomed—betrayed! You remember the massacre of St. Bartholomew, a blood-stained page of history for all time! The world would tell you that we have outlived the age of such barbarous doings. It is not true. My friend David, it is not true. It is a more terrible thing, this which is coming. Body and soul, we are to perish."

He came over to her side once more and laid his hand soothingly on hers. It was heartrending to witness the agony of the woman he loved.

"Dear Louise," he said, "after all, this is profitless. There may yet be compromises."

She suffered her hand to remain in his, but the bitterness did not pass out of her face or tone.

"Compromises!" she repeated. "Do you believe, then, that we are like those ancient races who felt the presence of a conqueror because their hosts were scattered in battle, and who suffered themselves passively to be led into captivity? My country can be conquered in one way, and one way only—not until her sons, ay, and her daughters, too, have perished, can these people rule. They will come to an empty and a stricken country, a country red with blood, desolate, with blackened houses and empty cities. The horror of it! Think, my friend David, the horror of it!"

Bellamy threw his head back with a sudden gesture of impatience.

"You take too much for granted," he declared. "England, at any rate, is not yet a conquered race. And there is France—Italy, too, if she is wise, will never suffer this thing from her ancient enemy."

"It is the might of the world which threatens," she murmured. "Your country may defend herself, but here she is powerless. Already it has been proved. Last year you declared yourself our friend—you and even Russia. Of what avail was it? Word came from Berlin and you were powerless."

Then tragedy broke into the room, tragedy in the shape of a man demented. For fifteen years Bellamy had known

Arthur Dorward, but this man was surely a stranger! He was hatless, disheveled, wild. A dull streak of color had mounted almost to his forehead; his eyes were on fire.

"Bellamy!" he cried. "Bellamy!"

Words failed him suddenly. He leaned against the table, breathless, panting heavily.

"For God's sake, man—" Bellamy began.

"Alone!" Dorward interrupted. "I must see you alone! I have news!"

Mademoiselle Idiale rose. She touched Bellamy on the shoulder. "You will come to me, or telephone," she whispered. "So?"

Bellamy opened the door and she passed out, with a farewell pressure of his fingers. Then he closed it firmly and came back.

II

"WHAT'S wrong, old man?" Bellamy asked quickly.

Dorward from a side table had seized the bottle of whiskey and a siphon, and was mixing himself a drink with trembling fingers. He tossed it off before he spoke a word. Then he turned around and faced his companion.

"Bellamy," he said, "lock the door."

Bellamy obeyed. He had no doubt now but that Dorward had lost his head in the Chancellor's presence—had made some absurd attempt to gain the knowledge which they both craved, and had failed.

"Bellamy," Dorward exclaimed, speaking hoarsely and still a little out of breath, "I guess I've had the biggest slice of luck that was ever dealt out to a human being. If only I can get safe out of this city, I tell you I've got the greatest scoop that living man ever handled."

"You don't mean that—"

Dorward wiped his forehead and interrupted.

"It's the most amazing thing that ever happened," he declared, "but I've got it here in my pocket, got it in black and white, in the Chancellor's own handwriting."

"Got what?"

"Why, what you and I, an hour ago, would have given a million for," Dorward replied.

Bellamy's expression was one of blank but wondering incredulity.

"You can't mean this, Dorward!" he exclaimed. "You may have something—just what the Chancellor wants you to print. You're not supposing for an instant that you've got the whole truth?"

Dorward's smile was the smile of certainty, his face that of a conqueror.

"Here in my pocket," he declared, striking his chest, "in the Chancellor's own handwriting. I tell you I've got the original verbatim copy of everything that passed and was resolved upon this afternoon between the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Austria and the Emperor of Germany. I've got it word for word as the Chancellor took it down. I've got their decision. I've got their several undertakings."

Bellamy for a moment was stricken dumb. He looked toward the door and back into his friend's face aglow with triumph. Then his power of speech returned.

"Do you mean to say that you stole it?"

Dorward struck the table with his fist.

"Not I! I tell you that the Chancellor gave it to me, gave it to me with his own hands, willingly—pressed it upon me. No, don't scoff!" he went on quickly. "Listen! This is a genuine thing. The Chancellor's mad. He was lying in a fit when I left the Palace. It will be in all the evening papers. You will hear the boys shouting it in the streets within a few minutes. Don't interrupt and I'll tell you the whole truth. You can believe me or not, as you like. It makes no odds."

"I arrived punctually and was shown into the anteroom. Even from there I could hear loud voices in the inner chamber and I knew that something was up. Presently a little fellow came out to me—a dark-bearded chap with gold-rimmed glasses. He was very polite, introduced himself as the Chan-

cellor's physician, regretted exceedingly that the Chancellor was unwell and could see no one—the excitement and hard work of the last few days had knocked him out. Well, I stood there arguing as pleasantly as I could about it, and then all of a sudden the door of the inner room was thrown open. The Chancellor himself stood on the threshold. There was no doubt about his being ill; his face was as pale as parchment; his eyes were simply wild, and his hair was all ruffled as though he had been standing upon his head. He began to talk to the physician in German. I didn't understand him until he began to swear—then it was wonderful! In the end he brushed them all away, and taking me by the arm, led me right into the inner room.

"For a long time he went on jabbering away half to himself, and I was wondering how on earth to bring the conversation round to the things I wanted to know about. Then, all of a sudden, he turned to me and seemed to remember who I was and what I wanted. 'Ah!' he said. 'You are Dorward, the American journalist. I remember you now. Lock the door.' I obeyed him pretty quick, for I had noticed they were mighty uneasy outside, and I was afraid they'd be disturbing us every moment. 'Come and sit down,' he ordered. I did so at once. 'You're a sensible fellow,' he declared. 'Today everyone is worrying me. They think that I am not well. It is foolish. I am quite well. Who would not be well on such a day as this?' I told him that I had never seen him looking better in my life, and he nodded and seemed pleased. 'You have come to hear the truth about the meeting of my master with the Czar and the Emperor of Germany?' he asked. 'That's so,' I told him. 'America's more than a little interested in these things, and I want to know what to tell her.' Then he leaned across the table. 'My young friend,' he said, 'I like you. You are straightforward. You speak plainly and you do not worry me. It is good. You shall tell your country what it is that we have planned, what the things

are that are coming. Yours is a great and wise country. When they know the truth, they will remember that Europe is a long way off and that the things which happen here are really no concern of theirs.' 'You are right,' I assured him—'dead right. Treat us openly—that's all we ask.' 'Shall I not do that, my young friend?' he answered. 'Now look; I give you this.'

He fumbled through all his pockets and at last drew out a long envelope, sealed at both ends with black sealing wax on which was printed a coat of arms with two tigers facing each other. He looked toward the door cautiously, and there was just that gleam in his eyes which madmen always have. 'Here it is,' he whispered, 'written with my own hand. This will tell you exactly what passed this afternoon. It will tell you our plans. It will tell you of the share which my master and the other two are taking. Button it up safely,' he said, 'and, whatever you do, do not let them know outside that you have got it. Between you and me,' he went on, leaning across the table, 'something seems to have happened to them all today. There's my old doctor there. He is worrying all the time, but he himself is not well. I can see it whenever he comes near me.' I nodded as though I understood, and the Chancellor tapped his forehead and grinned. Then I got up as casually as I could, for I was terribly afraid that he wouldn't let me go. We shook hands, and I tell you his fingers were like pieces of burning coal. Just as I was moving, someone knocked at the door. Then he began to storm again, kicked his chair over, threw a paper-weight at the window and talked such nonsense that I couldn't follow him. I unlocked the door myself and found the doctor there. I contrived to look as frightened as possible. 'His Highness is not well enough to talk to me,' I whispered. 'You had better look after him.' I heard a shout behind and a heavy fall. Then I closed the door and slipped away as quietly as I could—and here I am."

Bellamy drew a long breath.

"My God! This is wonderful!" he muttered. "How long is it since you left the Palace?"

"About ten minutes or a quarter of an hour," Dorward answered.

"They'll find it out at once," declared the other. "They'll miss the paper. Perhaps he'll tell them himself that he has given it to you. Don't let us run any risks, Dorward. Tear it open. Let us know the truth, at any rate. If you have to part with the document we can remember its contents. Out with it, man, quick! They may be here at any moment."

Dorward drew a few steps back. Then he shook his head.

"I guess not," he said firmly.

Bellamy regarded his friend in blank and uncomprehending amazement.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "You're not going to keep it to yourself? You know what it means to me—to England?"

"Your old country can look after herself pretty well," Dorward declared. "Anyhow, she'll have to take her chance. I am not here as a philanthropist. I am an American journalist, and I'll part to nobody with the biggest thing that's ever come into any man's hands."

Bellamy, with a tremendous effort, maintained his self-control. "What are you going to do with it?" he asked quickly.

"I tell you I'm off out of the country tonight," Dorward declared. "I shall head for England. Pearce is there himself, and it will be just the greatest day of my life when I put this packet in his hand. We'll make New York hum, I can promise you—and Europe, too."

Bellamy's manner was perfectly quiet—too quiet to be altogether natural. His hand was straying toward his pocket.

"Dorward," he said, speaking rapidly and keeping his back to the door, "you don't realize what you're up against. This sort of thing is new to you. You haven't a dog's chance of leaving Vienna alive with that in your pocket. If you trust yourself in the

Orient Express tonight, you'll never be allowed to cross the frontier. By this time they know that the packet is missing; they know, too, that you are the only man who could have it, whether the Chancellor has told them the truth or not. Open it at once so that we get some good out of it. Then we'll go round to the embassy. We can slip out by the back way, perhaps. Remember, I have spent my life in the service, and I tell you that there's no other place in the city where your life is worth a snap of the fingers but at your embassy or mine. Open the packet, man."

"I think not," Dorward answered firmly. "I am an American citizen. I have broken no laws nor done anyone any harm. If there's any slaughtering about, I guess they'll hesitate before they begin with Arthur Dorward. . . . Don't be a fool, man!"

He took a quick step backward—he was looking into the muzzle of Bellamy's revolver.

"Dorward," the latter exclaimed, "I can't help it! Yours is only a personal ambition—I stand for my country. Share the knowledge of that packet with me or I shall shoot."

"Then shoot and be damned to you!" Dorward declared fiercely. "This is my show, not yours. You and your country can go to—"

He broke off without finishing his sentence. There was a thunderous knocking at the door. The two men looked at one another for a moment speechless. Then Bellamy, with a smothered oath, replaced the revolver in his pocket.

"You've thrown away our chance," he said bitterly.

Springing for the inner door, "Not mine, though!" Dorward muttered.

The knocking was repeated. When Bellamy with a shrug of the shoulders answered the summons, three men in plain clothes entered. They saluted Bellamy, but their eyes were traveling around the room.

"We are seeking Herr Dorward, the American journalist," one exclaimed. "He was here but a moment ago."

Bellamy pointed to the inner door. He had had too much experience in such matters to attempt any prevarication. The three men crossed the room quickly and Bellamy followed in the rear. He heard a cry of disappointment from the foremost as he opened the door. The inner room was empty!

III

LOUISE looked up eagerly as he entered.

"There is news!" she exclaimed. "I can see it in your face."

"Yes," Bellamy answered, "there is news! That is why I have come. Where can we talk?"

She rose to her feet. Before them the open French windows led onto a smooth green lawn. She took his arm.

"Come outside with me," she said. "I am shut up here because I will not see the doctors whom they send, nor anyone from the Opera House. An envoy from the Palace has been here and I have sent him away."

"You mean to keep your word, then?"

"Have I ever broken it? Never again will I sing in this city. It is so."

Bellamy looked around. The garden of the villa was inclosed by high gray stone walls. They were secure here, at least, from eavesdroppers. She rested her fingers lightly upon his arm, holding up the skirts of her loose gown with the other hand.

"I have spoken to you," he said, "of Dorward, the American journalist."

She nodded. "Of course," she assented. "You told me that the Chancellor had promised him an interview for today."

"Well, he went to the Palace and the Chancellor saw him."

She looked at him with upraised eyebrows. "The newspapers are full of lies as usual, then, I suppose. The latest telegrams say that the Chancellor is dangerously ill."

"It is quite true," Bellamy declared. "What I am going to tell you is surprising, but I had it from Dorward him-

self. When he reached the Palace, the Chancellor was practically insane. His doctors were trying to persuade him to go to his room and lie down, but he heard Dorward's voice and insisted upon seeing him. The man was mad—on the verge of a collapse—and he handed over to Dorward his notes and a verbatim report of all that passed at the Palace this morning."

She looked at him incredulously.

"My dear David!" she exclaimed.

"It is amazing," he admitted, "but it is the truth. I know it for a fact. The man was absolutely beside himself; he had no idea what he was doing."

"Where is it?" she asked quickly.

"You have seen it?"

"Dorward would not give it up," he said bitterly. "While we argued in our sitting room at the hotel the police arrived. Dorward escaped through the bedroom and down the service stairs. He spoke of trying to catch the Orient Express tonight, but I doubt if they will ever let him leave the city."

"It is wonderful, this," she murmured softly. "What are you going to do?"

"Louise, you and I have few secrets from each other. I would have killed Dorward to obtain that sealed envelope, because I believe that the knowledge of its contents in London today would save us from disaster. To know how far each is pledged, and from which direction the first blow is to come, would be our salvation."

"I cannot understand," she said, "why he should have refused to share his knowledge with you. He is an American—it is almost the same thing as being an Englishman. And you are friends—I am sure that you have helped him often."

"It was a matter of vanity—simply cursed vanity," Bellamy answered. "It would have been the greatest journalistic success of modern times for him to have printed that document, word for word, in his paper. He fights for his own hand alone."

"And you?" she whispered.

"He will have to reckon with me,"

Bellamy declared. "I know that he is going to try and leave Vienna tonight, and if he does I shall be at his heels."

She nodded her head thoughtfully.

"I, too," she announced. "I come with you, my friend. I do no more good here, and they worry my life out all the time. I come to sing in London at Covent Garden. I have agreements there which only await my signature. We will go together; is it not so?"

"Very well," he answered; "only remember that my movements must depend very largely upon Dorward's. The train leaves at eight o'clock, station time. I have already a coupé reserved."

"I come with you," she murmured.

"I am very weary of this city."

They walked on for a few paces in silence. Bellamy looked around the gardens, brilliant with flowering shrubs and rose trees, with here and there some delicate piece of statuary half hidden among the wealth of foliage. The villa had once belonged to a royal favorite, and the grounds had been its chief glory. They reached a sheltered seat and sat down. A few yards away a tiny waterfall came tumbling over the rocks into a deep pool. They were hidden from the windows of the villa by the boughs of a drooping chestnut tree. Bellamy stooped and kissed her upon the lips.

"Ours is a strange courtship, Louise," he whispered softly.

She took his hand in hers and smoothed it. She had returned his kiss but she had drawn a little further away from him.

"Ah, my dear friend," looking at him with sorrow in her eyes, "courtship is scarcely the word, is it? For you and me there is nothing to hope for, nothing beyond."

He leaned toward her.

"Never believe that," he begged.

"These days are dark enough, heaven knows, yet the work of everyone has its goal. Even our turn may come."

Something flickered for a moment in her face, something which seemed to make a different woman of her. Bellamy saw it, and hardened though he

was, he felt the slow stirring of his own pulses. He kissed her hand passionately and she shivered.

"We must not talk of these things," she said. "We must not think of them. At least, our friendship has been wonderful. Now I must go in. I must tell my maid and arrange to steal away to-night."

They stood up, and he held her in his arms for a moment. Though her lips met his freely enough, he was very conscious of the reserve with which she yielded herself to him, conscious of it and thankful, too. They walked up the path together, and as they went she plucked a red rose and thrust it through his buttonhole.

"If we had no dreams," she said softly, "life would not be possible. Perhaps some day even we may pluck roses together."

He raised her fingers to his lips. It was not often that they lapsed into sentiment. When she spoke again it was finished.

"You had better leave," she told him, "by the garden gate. There are the usual crowd in my anteroom, and it is well that you and I are not seen too much together."

"Till this evening," he whispered, as he turned away. "I shall be at the station early. If Dorward is taken, I shall still leave Vienna. If he goes, it may be an eventful journey."

IV

DORWARD, whistling softly to himself, sat in a corner of his coupé rolling innumerable cigarettes. He was a man of unbounded courage and wonderful resource, but with a slightly exaggerated idea as to the sanctity of an American citizen. He had served his apprenticeship in his own country, and his name had become a household word owing to his brilliant success as war correspondent in the Russo-Japanese War. His experience of European countries, however, was limited. After the more obvious dangers with which he had grappled and which he had over-

come during his adventurous career, he was disposed to be a little contemptuous of the subtler perils at which his friend Bellamy had plainly hinted. He had made his escape from the hotel without any very serious difficulty, and since that time, although he had taken no particular precautions, he had remained unmolested. From his own point of view, therefore, it was perhaps only reasonable that he should no longer have any misgiving as to his personal safety. Arrest as a thief was the worst which he had feared. Even that it seemed now he had evaded.

The coupé was exceedingly comfortable, and, after all, he had had a somewhat exciting day. He lit a cigarette and stretched himself out with a murmur of immense satisfaction. He was close upon the great triumph of his life. He was perfectly content to lie there and look out upon the flying landscape, upon which the shadows were now fast descending. He was safe, absolutely safe, he assured himself. Nevertheless, when the door of his coupé was opened, he started almost like a guilty man. The relief in his face as he recognized his visitor was obvious. It was Bellamy who entered and dropped into a seat by his side.

"Wasting your time, aren't you?" the latter remarked, pointing to the growing heap of cigarettes.

"Well, I guess not," Dorward answered. "I can smoke this lot before we reach London."

Bellamy smiled enigmatically. "I don't think that you will," he said.

"Why not?"

"You are such a sanguine person," Bellamy sighed. "Personally, I do not think that there is the slightest chance of your reaching London, at all."

Dorward laughed scornfully. "And why not?" he asked.

Bellamy merely shrugged his shoulders. Dorward seemed to find the gesture irritating.

"You've got espionage on the brain, my dear friend," he declared drily. "I suppose it's the result of your profession. I may not know so much about

Europe as you do, but I am inclined to think that an American citizen traveling with his passport on a train like this is moderately safe, especially when he's not above a scrap by way of taking care of himself."

"You're a plucky fellow," remarked Bellamy.

"I don't see any pluck about it. In Vienna, I must admit, I shouldn't have been surprised if they'd tried to fake up some sort of charge against me, but anyhow, they didn't. Guess they'd find it a pretty tall order trying to interfere with an American citizen."

Bellamy looked at his friend curiously. "I suppose you're not bluffing, by any chance, Dorward?" he said. "You really believe what you say?"

"Why in thunder shouldn't I?" Dorward asked.

Bellamy sighed. "My dear Dorward," he said, "it is amazing to me that a man of your experience should talk and behave like a baby. You've taken some notice of your fellow passengers, I suppose?"

"I've seen a few of them," Dorward answered carelessly. "What about them?"

"Nothing much," Bellamy declared, "except that there are, to my certain knowledge, three high officials of the secret police of Austria in the next coupé but one, and at least four or five of their subordinates somewhere on board the train."

Dorward withdrew his cigarette from his mouth and looked at his friend keenly. "I guess you're trying to scare me, Bellamy," he remarked.

But Bellamy was suddenly grave. There had come into his face an utterly altered expression. His tone when he spoke was almost solemn.

"Dorward," he said, "upon my honor I assure you that what I have told you is the truth. I cannot seem to make you realize the seriousness of your position. When you left the Palace with that paper in your pocket, you were, to all intents and purposes, a doomed man. Your passport and your American citizenship count for absolutely nothing. I have come in to warn

you that if you have any last messages to leave, you had better give them to me now."

"This is a pretty good bluff you're putting up!" Dorward exclaimed contemptuously. "The long and short of it is, I suppose, that you want me to break the seal of this document and let you read it."

Bellamy shook his head.

"It is too late for that, Dorward," he said. "If the seal were broken, they'd very soon guess where I came in, and it wouldn't help the work I have in hand for me to be picked up with a bullet in my forehead on the railway track."

Dorward frowned uneasily. "What are you here for, anyway, then?" he asked.

"Well, frankly, not to argue with you," Bellamy answered. "As a matter of fact, you are no use to me any longer. I am sorry, old man. You can't say that I didn't give you good advice. I am bound to play for my own hand, though, in this matter, and if I get any benefit at all out of my journey, it will be after some regrettable accident has happened to you."

"Say, ring the bell for drinks and chuck this!" Dorward exclaimed. "I've had about enough of it. I am not denying anything you say, but if these fellows really are on board they'll think twice before they meddle with me."

"On the contrary," Bellamy assured him, "they will not take the trouble to think at all. Their minds are perfectly made up as to what they are going to do. However, that's finished. I have nothing more to say."

Dorward gazed for a minute or two fixedly out of the window. "Look here, Bellamy," he said, turning abruptly round; "supposing I change my mind—supposing I open this precious document and let you read it over with me?"

Bellamy rose hastily to his feet.

"You must not think of it!" he exclaimed. "You would simply write my death warrant. Don't allude to that matter again. I have risked enough in coming in here to sit with you."

"Then, for heaven's sake, don't stop any longer!" Dorward said irritably. "You get on my nerves with all this foolish talk. In an hour's time I am going to bolt my door and go to sleep. We'll breakfast together in the morning, if you like."

Bellamy said nothing. The steward had brought them the whiskies and sodas which Dorward had ordered. Bellamy raised his tumbler to his lips and set it down again.

"Forgive me," he said. "I do not think that I am thirsty."

Dorward drank his off at a gulp. Almost immediately he closed his eyes. Bellamy, with a little shrug of the shoulders, left him alone. As he passed along to his own coupé, he met Louise in the corridor.

"You have seen Von Behrling?" he whispered.

She nodded.

"He is in that coupé, Number 7, alone," she said. "I invited him to come in with me, but he seemed embarrassed. It is his companions who watch him all the time. He has promised to talk with me later."

In the middle of the night Louise opened her eyes to find Bellamy bending over her.

"Louise," he whispered, "it is Von Behrling who will take possession of the packet. They have been discussing whether it will not be safer to go on to London instead of doubling back. See Von Behrling again. Do all you can to persuade him to come to London—all you can, Louise, remember."

"So," she whispered. "I shall put on my dressing gown and sit in the corridor. It is hot here."

Bellamy glided out, closing the door softly behind him. The train was rushing on now through the blackness of an unusually dark night. For some time he sat in his own compartment, listening. The voices whose muttered conversation he had overheard were silent now, but once he fancied that he heard shuffling footsteps and a little cry. In his heart he knew well that before morning Dorward would have disappeared. The man within him was hard

to subdue. He longed to make his way to Dorward's side, to interfere in this terribly unequal struggle, yet he made no movement. Dorward was a man and a friend, but what was a life more or less? It was to a greater cause that he was pledged. Toward three o'clock he lay down on his bed and slept.

The train attendant brought him his coffee soon after daylight. The man's hand's were trembling.

"Where are we?" Bellamy asked sleepily.

"Near Munich, monsieur," the man answered. "Monsieur noticed, perhaps, that we stopped for some time in the night?"

Bellamy shook his head. "I sleep soundly," he said. "I heard nothing."

"There has been an accident," the man declared. "An American gentleman who got in at Vienna was drinking whiskey all night and became very drunk. In a tunnel he threw himself out upon the line."

Bellamy shuddered a little. He had been prepared, but none the less it was an awful thing, this.

"You are sure that the man is dead?" he asked.

The man was very sure indeed. "There is a doctor from Vienna upon the train, sir," he said. "He examined him at once, but death must have been instantaneous."

Bellamy drew a long breath and commenced to put on his clothes. The next move was for him.

V

BELLAMY stole along the half-lit corridors of the train until he came to the coupé which had been reserved for Mademoiselle Idiale. Assured that he was not watched, he softly turned the handle of the door and entered. Louise was sitting up in her dressing gown, drinking her coffee. He held up his finger and she greeted him with only a nod.

"Forgive me, Louise," he whispered. "I dared not knock, and I was obliged to see you at once."

She smiled. "It is of no consequence," she said. "One is always prepared here. The porter, the ticket man and at the customs—they all enter. Is anything wrong?"

"It has happened," he answered.

She shivered a little and her face became grave. "Poor fellow!" she murmured.

"He simply sat still and asked for it," Bellamy declared, still speaking in a cautious undertone. "He would not be warned. I could have saved him, if anyone could, but he would not hear reason."

"He was what you call pig-headed," she remarked.

"He has paid the penalty," Bellamy continued. "Now listen to me, Louise. I got into that small coupé next to Von Behrling's, and I feel sure, from what I overheard, that they will go on to London, all three of them."

"Who is there on the train?" she demanded.

"Baron Streuss, who is head of the Secret Police, Von Behrling and Adolf Kahn," Bellamy answered. "Then there are four or five Secret Service men of the rank and file, but they are all traveling separately. Von Behrling has the packet. The others form a sort of cordon around him."

"But why," she asked, "does he go on to London? Why not return to Vienna?"

"For one thing," Bellamy replied, with a grim smile, "they are afraid of me. Then you must remember that this affair of Dorward will be talked about. They do not want to seem in any way implicated. To return from any one of these stations down the line would create suspicion."

She nodded. "Well?"

"I am going to leave the train at the next stop," he continued. "I find that I shall just catch the Northern Express to Berlin. From there I shall come on to London as quickly as I can. You know the address of my rooms?"

She nodded. "15 Fitzroy Street."

"When I get there, let me have a line waiting to tell me where I can see you. While I am on the train you will find

Von Behrling almost inaccessible. Directly I have gone it will be different. Play with him carefully. He should not be difficult. To tell you the truth, I am rather surprised that he has been trusted upon a mission like this. He was in disgrace with the Chancellor a short while ago, and I know that he was hurt at not being allowed to attend the conference. The others will watch him closely, but they cannot overhear everything that passes between you two. Von Behrling is a poor man. You will know how to make him wish he were rich."

Very slowly her eyebrows rose. She looked at him doubtfully.

"It is a slender chance, David," she remarked. "Von Behrling is a little wild, I know, and he pretends to be very much in love with me, but I do not think that he would sell his country. Then, too, see how he will be watched. I do not suppose they will leave us alone for a moment."

Bellamy took her hands in his, gripping them with almost unnatural force.

"Louise," he declared earnestly, "you don't quite realize Von Behrling's special weakness and your extraordinary strength. You know that you are beautiful, I suppose, but you do not quite know what that means. I have heard men talk about you till one would think that they were children. You have something of that art or guile—call it what you will—which passes from you through a man's blood to his brain, and carries him indeed to heaven—but carries him there mad. Louise, don't be angry with me for what I say. Remember that I know my sex. I know you, too, and I trust you, but you can turn Von Behrling from a sane, honorable man into what you will, without suffering his lips to touch even your fingers. Von Behrling has that packet in his possession. When I come to see you in London, I will bring you twenty thousand pounds in Bank of England notes. With that Von Behrling might fancy himself on his way to America—with you."

She closed her eyes for a moment. Perhaps she wished to keep hidden

from him the thoughts which chased one another through her brain. He wished to make use of her—of her, the woman whom he loved. Then she remembered that it was for her country and his, and the anger passed.

"But I am afraid," she said softly, "that the moment they reach London this document will be taken to the Austrian Embassy."

"Before then," Bellamy declared, "Von Behrling must not know whether he is in heaven or upon earth. It will not be opened in London. He can make up another packet to resemble precisely the one of which he robbed Dorward. Oh, it is a difficult game, I know, but it is worth playing. Remember, Louise, that we are not petty conspirators. It is your country's very existence that is threatened. It is for her sake as well as for England."

"I shall do my best," she murmured, looking into his face. "Oh, you may be sure that I shall do my best!"

Bellamy raised her fingers to his lips and stole away. The electric lights had been turned out, but the morning was cloudy and the light dim. Back in his own berth, he put his things together, ready to leave at Munich. Then he rang for the porter.

"I am getting out at the next stop," he announced.

"Very good, monsieur," the man answered.

Bellamy looked at him closely. "You are a Frenchman?"

"It is so, monsieur!"

"I may be wrong," Bellamy continued slowly, "but I believe that if I asked you a question and it concerned some Germans and Austrians you would tell me the truth."

The man's gesture was inimitable. Englishmen to him were obviously the salt of the earth. Germans and Austrians—why, they existed as the cattle in the fields—nothing more. Bellamy gave him a sovereign.

"There were three Austrians who got in at Vienna," he said. "They are in Numbers 10 and 11."

"But yes, monsieur," the man assented. "As yet I think they are fast

asleep. Not one of them has rung for his coffee."

"Where are they booked for?"

"For London, monsieur."

"You do not happen," Bellamy continued, "to have heard them say anything about leaving the train before then?"

"On the contrary, sir," the porter answered, "two of the gentlemen have been inquiring about the boat across to Dover. They were very anxious to travel by a turbine."

Bellamy nodded. "Thank you very much. You will be so discreet as to forget that I have asked you any questions concerning them. As for me, if one would know, I am on my way to Berlin."

The bell rang. The man looked outside and put his head once more in Bellamy's coupé.

"It is one of the gentleman who has rung," he declared. "If anything is said about leaving the train, I shall report it at once to monsieur."

"You will do well," Bellamy answered.

The porter returned in a few moments.

"Two of the gentlemen, sir," he announced, "are undressed and in their pajamas. They have ordered their breakfast to be served after we leave Munich."

Bellamy nodded.

"Further, sir," the man continued, coming a little closer, "one of them asked me whether the English gentleman—meaning you—was going through to London or not. I told them that you were getting out at the next station and that I thought you were going to Berlin."

"Quite right," Bellamy said. "If they ask any more questions, let me know."

Mademoiselle Idiale, with the aid of one of the two maids who were traveling with her, was able to make a sufficiently effective toilet. At a few minutes before the time for luncheon, she walked down the corridor and recognized Von Behrling, who was sitting with his companions in one of the compartments.

"Ah, it is indeed you, then!" she exclaimed, smiling at him.

He rose to his feet and came out. Tall, with a fair mustache and blue eyes, he was often taken for an Englishman and was inclined to be proud of the fact.

"You have rested well, I trust, mademoiselle?" he asked, bowing low over her fingers.

"Excellently," replied Louise. "Will you not take me in to luncheon? The car is full of men and I am not comfortable alone. It is not pleasant, either, to eat with one's maids."

"I am honored," he declared. "Will you permit me for one moment?"

He turned and spoke to his companions. Louise saw at once that they were protesting vigorously. She saw, too, that Von Behrling only became more obstinate and that he was very nearly angry. She moved a few steps on down the corridor, and stood looking out of the window. He joined her almost immediately.

"Come," he said; "they will be serving luncheon in five minutes. We will go and take a good place."

"Your friends, I am afraid," she remarked, "did not like your leaving them. They are not very gallant."

"To me it is indifferent," he answered, fiercely twirling his mustache. "Streuss there is an old fool. He has always some fancy in his brain."

Louise raised her eyebrows slightly. "You are your own master, I suppose," she said. "The Baron is used to command his policemen, and sometimes he forgets. There are many people who find him too autocratic."

"He means well," Von Behrling asserted. "It is his manner only which is against him."

They found a comfortable table, and she sat smiling at him across the white cloth.

"If this is not Sacher's," she said, "it is at least more pleasant than lunching alone."

"I can assure you, mademoiselle," he declared, with a vigorous twirl of his mustache, "that I find it so."

"Always gallant," she murmured. "Tell me, is it true of you—the news which I heard just before I felt Vienna? Have you really resigned your post with the Chancellor?"

"You heard that?" he asked slowly.

She hesitated for a moment. "I heard something of the sort," she admitted. "To be quite candid with you, I think it was reported that the Chancellor was making a change on his own account."

"So that is what they say, is it? What do they know about it—these gossipers?"

"You were not allowed at the conference yesterday," she remarked.

"No one was allowed there, so that goes for nothing."

"Ah! Well," she said, looking meditatively out upon the landscape, "a year ago the thought of that conference would have driven me wild. I should not have been content until I had learned somehow or other what had transpired. Lately, I am afraid, my interest in my country seems to have grown a trifle cold. Perhaps because I have lived in Vienna I have learned to look at things from your point of view. Then, too, the world is a selfish place, and our own little careers are, after all, the most important part of it."

Von Behrling eyed her curiously. "It seems strange to hear you talk like this," he remarked.

She looked out of the window for a moment.

"Oh, I still love my country, in a way," she answered, "and I still hate all Austrians, in a way, but it is not as it used to be with me, I must admit. If we had two lives, I would give one to my country and keep one for myself. Since we have only one, I am afraid, after all, that I am human, and I want to taste some of its pleasures."

"Some of its pleasures," Von Behrling repeated, a little gloomily. "Ah, that is easy enough for you, mademoiselle!"

"Not so easy as it may appear," she answered. "One needs many things to get the best out of life. One needs wealth and one needs love, and one

needs them while one is young, while one can enjoy."

"It is true," Von Behrling admitted.

"If one is not careful," she continued, "one lets the years slip by. They can never come again. If one does not live while one is young, there is no other chance."

Von Behrling assented with renewed gloom. He was twenty-five years old, and his income barely paid for his uniforms. Of late, this fact had materially interfered with his enjoyments.

"It is strange," he said, "that you should talk like this. You have the world at your feet, mademoiselle. You have only to throw the handkerchief."

Her lips parted in a dazzling smile. The bluest eyes in the world grew softer as they looked into his. Von Behrling felt his cheeks burn.

"My friend, it is not so easy," she murmured. "Tell me," she continued, "why it is that you have so little self-confidence. Is it because you are poor?"

"I am a beggar," bitterly.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Well," she said, glancing down the menu which the waiter had brought, "if you are poor and content to remain so, one must presume that you have compensations."

"But I have none!" he declared. "You should know that—you, mademoiselle. Life for me means one thing and one thing only!"

She looked at him for a moment, and down upon the tablecloth. Von Behrling shook like a man in the throes of some great passion.

"We talk too intimately," she whispered, as the people began to file in. "After luncheon we will take our coffee in my coupé. Then, if you like, we will speak of these matters. Here come your bodyguard. They look at me as though I had stolen you away. Remember, I look to you to amuse me."

Von Behrling's journey was, after all, marked with sharp contrasts. The kindness of the woman he adored transported him into a seventh heaven. On the other hand, he had trouble with his friends. Streuss drew him

on one side at Ostend, and talked plainly.

"Von Behrling," he said, "I speak to you on behalf of Kahn and myself. Wine and women and pleasure are good things. But there is a place and a time for them, and it is not now. Our mission is too serious."

"Well, well!" Von Behrling exclaimed impatiently. "What have you to say against me? If I talk with Mademoiselle Idiale, it is because it is the natural thing for me to do. Would you have us travel arm in arm and speak never a word to our fellow passengers? Would you have us proclaim to all the world that we are on a secret mission, carrying a secret document, to obtain which we have already committed a crime? You talk foolishly, Streuss!"

"It is you," the older man declared, "who play the fool, and we will not have it! Mademoiselle Idiale is a Serbian and a patriot. She is the friend, too, of Bellamy, the Englishman. She and he were together last night."

"Bellamy is not even on the train," Von Behrling protested. "He went north to Berlin. That itself is proof that they know nothing. If he had had the merest suspicion, do you not think he would have stayed with us?"

"Bellamy is very clever," Streuss answered. "There are too many of us to deal with—he knew that."

"What is it that you want?"

"That you speak no more with mademoiselle."

Von Behrling drew himself up.

"And I refuse! Let me remind you that I am in charge of this expedition. I welcome your companionship. It makes for strength that we travel together. But for the rest, the enterprise has been mine, the success so far has been mine, and the termination of it shall be mine. Watch me, if you like. Stay with me and see that I am not robbed, if you fear that I am not able to take care of myself, but do not ask me to behave like an idiot."

Von Behrling stepped away quickly. The siren was already blowing from the steamer.

(To be continued.)

DAPHNE

[By WYNDHAM MARTYN

LOSING her father when she was less than a year old, Daphne Elton was brought by her mother to the old Elton mansion on the banks of the upper reaches of the James River. The first incident which she remembered clearly was being taken from her bed on the eve of Christmas and brought to the side of her mother, who was lying very ill in a great somber apartment wherein the Eltons for many generations had been wont to die. The child wondered why her colored mammy cried and rolled her eyes and muttered verses and snatches of hymns. And she wondered, also, why her mother, who usually hugged her to her heart, held her at arm's length and stared so curiously into her face. There was a strange air of stillness which oppressed her so that she cried bitterly. It was only when her sobs rang out that the mother folded the child to her bosom and comforted her.

She presently sobbed herself to sleep and was carried back to her cot. Mrs. Elton beckoned her aunt to her side. Almost unwillingly Miss Sophie Elton, grim, white and very old, came to the bed.

"You have never liked me," said the dying woman, "and I have never understood or tried to understand you. If I could have left my Daphne with anyone else I should have done so. But since I must leave her here and you must care for her, remember that she inherits from me a great capacity for suffering. Let her life have color." She shivered as her eyes looked about the somber room. "She is so tiny to leave all alone."

Miss Elton bent over her niece. "I shall do my duty," she returned.

The younger woman turned over on her side. Her child, she knew, needed love, and this grim old woman would offer her only dutiful care. And, like her child, she sobbed herself to sleep; but hers was a sleep which banished the gaunt, somber house forever.

As the years went by Daphne grew into a plain and awkward child, very pallid of face. At twelve, the only love she had ever known, apart from that of the mother who had died when she was four, was offered her by the two faithful colored women, the sole servitors in a great mansion which had at one time been famed for its hospitality in a State where hospitality was traditional. The elder woman, born an Elton slave, had, like so many others, refused to leave at the decree of emancipation. Her daughter Hannah, now a middle-aged woman, remained devotedly attached to the family which had in other years protected them.

Her great-aunt the child rarely saw. Miss Elton was engrossed in the literature of a strange religious sect which looked for the second coming. Day and night the old woman prayed and read her Bible, and when she spoke to the child it was to prepare her for the Day of Judgment. For a year Daphne was desperately oppressed by the fear that she was a sinner of the deepest dye. Unless she repented, she was told, her end would be terrible. From Doré's illustrations of Dante's "Inferno" she conjured up visions of a future which kept her awake at night.

But Hannah, who loved the child with a love that led her to defy Miss

Elton, found out what was ailing her, and presented to her a theology which, while it might have been less conventional than her aunt's, was infinitely more comforting. She grew in time to pity her aunt, contented in the knowledge that the horrors of Doré were unreal.

When she was twelve, and still a lonely, strange, speculative child, her aunt suddenly realized that she knew nothing. She had not even learned to read or write. The Eltons had been a family of university graduates. At a time when Northerners seldom sent their sons to the great colleges, Southerners were flocking to these seats of learning. Miss Elton in her young days had learned Italian, French and music, together with a ladylike knowledge of English. It had been her boast, these many years ago, that no fingers in the South were nimbler in the finer sorts of fancywork. When she remembered that of these arts the child intrusted to her knew nothing, she laid aside her religious books, and summoning Hannah and her mother, essayed to make her a wardrobe suitable for school.

Not skilled in the fashioning of children's garments, the three women provided Daphne with an outfit that was pathetically inadequate. It only seemed to the child that some brighter color might be used. She was accustomed to learn from Miss Elton that she was ugly; and it was therefore with a certain pathetic wistfulness that she gazed at the more attractive of her future intimates. There was one dazzling blonde with blue eyes and cheeks like roses who seemed to her the incarnation of all that was lovely. Conscious of her beauty and assured position, she laughed frankly when she beheld the gaunt, angular, pallid girl who looked at her with adoring eyes.

It was then that the knowledge of the power of dress was born in the orphan. She knew that among the hundred girls there she was the only one really badly dressed. She did not know that grim Miss Sophia was

demanding the names of the other children and sniffing scornfully as she received her answers. The Eltons of Virginia, did the girl but know it, needed no pretty clothes in their own State to attract attention. Theirs was a name written large in its history, a name which a splendid prodigality had brought to an obscure fate.

There was one sister who in the world had known some of the Eltons, and was now called Sister Jeanne de Jesu, who came to her and took her hand. Presently the child found herself in the convent chapel. Sister Jeanne was the organist and music mistress. "Are you fond of music?" she asked the child.

"I don't know," returned Daphne, wondering. She had delighted in the old songs the colored women crooned, and she had heard of pianos and violins and organs, but there was not in the great house on the James River any of these.

She looked wonderingly at the sister as she made her way to the organ loft. And presently, when the instrument swelled into a beautiful symphony, she knew that the love for what she supposed must be music was filling her heart with inexpressible emotion. Then Sister Jeanne de Jesu, in a voice that was pure and sexless as a boy's, sang an "Ave Maria."

When it was over the child seized the hands of the kind sister and kissed them. "You are the first white person who has ever been good to me," she whispered. Her great dark eyes glowed with the intensity of her emotion. "I hate all other white people except you."

But for Sister Jeanne, her first year at the convent would have been one of unalloyed misery. After the weary lessons in elementary studies, which she mastered easily, she would repair to the chapel. She had a sweet, true, high voice, which was as yet too immature to develop; but when she listened to the sisters singing she made up her mind that it was her vocation.

The years as they passed at the convent became kinder to the child.

The angular limbs became graceful and rounded, and the hollow, pinched face lost its pallor. When she was sixteen Daphne was the acknowledged leader. Under Sister Jeanne's tuition her voice developed into a light, flexible soprano of good quality. When the time came for her to leave the convent and go back to her quiet home she found herself a passable musician, with a voice above the average and an undeniable skill in languages.

She had never lost her dread of Miss Elton, and it was with some nervousness that she asked her concerning money matters. "Have I anything of my own?" she demanded.

"Nothing," she was told shortly. "When I am dead you will have what there is. Your father wasted his money; your mother had little. We two are the only Eltons living."

One day in a cupboard Daphne came upon some old dresses which had belonged to some former Elton. The silk cracked and split as she fingered it, but the velvet was seemingly as perfect as when it had, a century ago, been brought from Europe. There were muslins, too, and strange webs which set the girl in a passion of delight. She set to work with deft fingers and blazed about the great, quiet house in a torrent of colors.

One morning, when she was nineteen, old Miss Elton, wearying of waiting for the second coming, died at her prayers. A lawyer from Richmond, who had in years past attended the dwindling affairs of the Eltons, carried the child off to his comfortable home while the estate was set in order. Heavily mortgaged, it fetched almost nothing. She would have had little with which to start out in the world had not some splendid specimens of Hepplewhite furniture been discovered, which, in New York brought record prices.

For nearly two years Daphne remained happy in Richmond, the contented guest of the lawyer's family.

Of her father she had learned much; of her mother they spoke with con-

straint. It was known only that she had been an actress or singer in a day when the stage was not so well thought of. She had been very beautiful; and Daphne, of middle height and slight figure, had conformed more to her type than to her father's.

It was in the Virginia capital that she was first brought into contact with young men. They did not come up to her expectations. Those of her own age seemed too conscious of their hands at dinner and of their feet at a dance. The old men, when they did not leer at her, bored her.

But it was not of men that she thought; it was of her new vocation. By this time she knew a great many operatic roles, and in her fancy saw herself the idol of the hour, the prima donna who could move men to tears by the magic of her voice. Neither Mr. Tate nor his daughters had much sympathy with her aims. They did not know that their countrywomen had already invaded the European grand opera field and had sung their way to popularity by sheer merit. There was something repugnant to them in the idea of an Elton masquerading under the title of Eltonia or Eltonetti, as they imagined she must do to gain a hearing.

When she was twenty-one and in possession of her modest fortune, Daphne set out for New York. She made her way to a modest boarding house facing Central Park and engaged a comfortable room. There were some music students there, who speedily made friends with her. She must, they told her, if she wanted to get on, take a studio in Carnegie Hall. The very address, they said, would be worth a great deal, and the *cachet* would be enormous. Daphne demurred when she heard that a hundred dollars a month was the usual figure. But they overruled her objections. She could sublet for every afternoon in the week if she liked. Other girls did it and so could she. So she allowed herself to be convinced and the next day she moved in.

Her first serious search was for a

teacher. A girl in an adjoining studio, who was engaged on a synthetic study of Bach, recommended a teacher well known in London and New York. "Ermanetti," she declared, "is just the man for your voice."

Ermanetti might have risen to a greater prominence in his work were it not for his perennial search after youth and beauty. His soul, he was in the habit of asserting, needed to be nourished on female loveliness. In the Southern girl he beheld much soul nutriment.

He said that her voice was light, though of good quality, and would probably never be strong. He was intensely satirical during the first month. In her lonely studio the girl writhed at the remembrance of his strictures, and wondered if she would ever get on. But she worked so hard at her studies that Ermanetti grew kinder. She was not to know that a first month of sarcasm and a second of commendation were always used with pretty pupils. By the third month he had adopted an air of affectionate familiarity which she had no thought of resenting. She believed in his skill as a teacher. Already she was overcoming the difficulties of the break between the upper and the head register. The dreams of her convent days, banished for so long, returned to her. By hard work she felt she would win. Ermanetti believed in her.

One Sunday night she returned from a day spent with friends at a New Jersey country club. She had been thinking more about her singing than the tennis she had played. Directly the lights were turned on she seated herself at the piano and ran over a few songs. But she was tired, and her voice was thin and reedy. As she rose from the piano there was a knock at the door.

Ermanetti came in smiling. He was a tiny man, gray-haired and suave, and his manners could be charming. Daphne was surprised but gratified. Here was the severe *maestro*, his harsh manner gone, calling on her unconventionally.

She was very gracious. "This is really very sweet of you," she said, when he had taken a seat and was looking curiously about him.

"You are very comfortable here," he said presently. "Do you share this studio?"

"I ought to," she answered, "but I like a room to myself."

"Aren't you ever lonely?" he demanded.

"There's my work," she said brightly. "You make me work too hard to be lonely."

"You mustn't work too hard," he replied.

"But I must," she cried, "if I want to get on."

"You're so ambitious, then?" he demanded.

"Overpoweringly," she told him. "When I went to my convent I wanted to sit down and improvise like the sister who taught music, and sing 'Ave Marias' as she did. Then I wanted to be a prima donna of grand opera. Now"—she shrugged her shoulders and smiled—"now I shall be satisfied if I can get the tiniest part of a rôle to sing."

"Haven't you any people living?" he asked.

"I am the last of my family," she said. "All other girls seem to have brothers and sisters and cousins, but I'm all alone."

"Poor child!" he said softly.

His sharp eyes had detected nothing in the studio which pointed to poverty, nor had he a pupil who dressed better. But there was an anxious note in her voice when she spoke of her prospects which reminded him of other girls who had either to make money by their voices or turn to some other work in order to live.

"You don't need to sing for a living?" he hinted.

"Indeed I do," she said, flushing—"and I have been fearfully extravagant. I thought I was being economical in taking this studio, but it hasn't proved so. I must get on, Mr. Ermanetti."

His silence frightened her. She looked for some sympathy, some hope

expressed that she would get on, if not an affirmation of a certainty of it.

"Don't you think I shall get on?" she asked desperately.

He looked at her critically. "Your voice is too white," he answered—"la voix blanche, you understand. You can express no emotion with it. It is pure and flexible as a boy's treble, but that is all; it is not the voice for interpretation."

"Couldn't I learn?" she cried. "You know how hard I can work."

Ermanetti took her thin hand with the long tapering finger in his own carefully manicured one.

"There is only one teacher," he whispered.

For the moment the girl hardly heard him. She had been afraid to think that her voice was colorless, but instinctively she knew it was true. When she had sat entranced as Sembrich sang she knew that it was not alone the great singer's flawless method she admired; it was the glorious color of her voice.

She looked into Ermanetti's face piteously. He had hair that was almost white, and he had been kind to her; and she had perfect faith in his teaching.

"What shall I do?" she asked.

"There is only one teacher," he repeated.

"I know," she returned. "I believe in you; I will do anything."

"I spoke of a greater teacher than I," he whispered.

"Who, then?" she demanded.

The man's breath came in gasps; he bent his head nearer. Round the faded eyes she saw flabby bags covered with innumerable wrinkles. There was no longer an air of fatherliness about him.

"Love only can teach you," he said. "Daphne, let me teach you to love."

Daphne rose to her slim height and pressed her hands to her head. What a fool she had been! She averted her head. She could not bear to look at him until she had herself better in hand.

Ermanetti was not reassured by her

silence. With some girls there had been no difficulties. He had even with some received provocation. She went to the two windows and flung them open wide; he watched in some trepidation. Then she came to the chair in which he still sat and looked down at him. He felt himself flushing at her insolent scrutiny. "You are sixty," she said at length. "You are only just five feet in height, and you have grandchildren nearly my age. I am not bad-looking, and I have youth; and I am an Elton of Virginia. If ever I marry it will be a man, not an old libertine." Her eyes flashed with sudden rage. "Do you think I need make such a bad bargain as you offer?" She stamped her foot. "Go!"

It was in the man's mind to make some defense, some man-of-the-world excuse, and even to laugh at her prudishness, but his eyes fell before hers. In his more despondent moods he could never rid himself of the shame he experienced as he crept from her room, feeling more than his age and humiliated beyond description.

When Ermanetti's bill was settled the girl calculated how long her stock of money would last if expended at the rate she was living. She was horrified at the result of her accounting. She would be penniless within six months if she did not speedily retrench. It was not difficult to dispose of her studio. There are always girls with money who welcome New York and singing as an emancipation from dreary homes. To such a one Daphne sold, and not without heartburnings, her little home.

Then she applied for work to an agency which sends singers to the "at homes" of the rich. At her first "at home" she was bidden to wait in a dismal room until her songs were needed. She sang well, but no one listened; and only the accompanist, who was also engaged as a soloist, thanked her. But she took home ten dollars. It was the first money she had earned.

One morning there was a note from the agent.

"Miss Granger can't sing today,"

he told her. "Old Mrs. Lowndes has her favorite songs and will have 'Florian's Song' each time. I suppose you know it?"

"Perfectly," she returned.

"Then you can go," he said. He gave her the address and dismissed her.

It was a house in what tourists are told is called Millionaire's Row. Until a footman ushered her into a little drawing-room, wherein was a grand piano, and which opened *en suite* into two larger rooms, she had never been in a house on which such great wealth and exquisite taste had been lavished. The door opened and Mrs. Lowndes came in. She was old but graceful and well preserved, and put the girl instantly at her ease. There were to be a 'cellist and a tenor from the Metropolitan Opera House.

One or two guests spoke to her kindly and gave her confidence. She had never sung Godard's charming song better. Interwoven with Mrs. Lowndes's earlier memories, this song never failed to please her. The girl was expected to sing three songs; she sang willingly half a dozen. The tenor, who guessed her vocal limitations, esteemed her as an artist and applauded vociferously.

Hilary Lowndes, his aunt's favorite and heir, sat down by the old lady's side. "Let the two men go," he said, "and keep the girl a bit. She's charming."

When her duty had been done, the girl rose to go. "Not yet, my dear," said Mrs. Lowndes, "I want to introduce you to some people who may be useful to you. Young singers can't know too many people."

But she had little opportunity to talk to anyone. Hilary Lowndes calmly and resolutely escorted her to a comfortable lounge and monopolized her.

At two and forty Hilary had tasted life whole, and the flavor it left was not altogether sweet. An only child, pampered from infancy and never without plenty of spending money, he had coquetted with all the vices without betraying it either in his face or conver-

sation. Of middle height, perfectly proportioned, he was one of the best fencers and dancers of his day, and possessed a tenor voice which, had he needed it, might have brought him fame. Since his temper was perfect when his own wishes were respected and his own foibles not interfered with, he passed for a man who was a thoroughly good sort. His friends did not claim an angelic halo for him, and his enemies had said that his sins were those of a gentleman. Mrs. Lowndes was very proud of him and sighed only that he would not marry. Yet for all his friends' commendations, his enemies' kindly strictures and his aunt's adoration, it would be hard to find a more finished roué than Hilary Lowndes.

His suggestion, which banished 'cellist and tenor, and left the soprano on a footing which the estimable Miss Granger had never been, was not due to any consideration for Daphne. She reminded him of a French singer who had held his youthful heart in thrall with her beauty twenty years before. His blood ran quicker as he bridged the years and thought of her. He had often cursed his inexperience in those far-off days.

Daphne looked at him first with a profound distrust. She saw a graceful, quiet-voiced man of early middle age, whose rather bored face and tired eyes suggested a languor to which his alert frame gave the lie. She liked him for his manner to his aunt and the elder women in the room. He did not seem in the least interested in the girl. It was rather as though he had obeyed his aunt and had talked to her for duty's sake.

"You sang charmingly," he said. "Who is your teacher?"

"Ermanetti was until recently," she answered.

He narrowed his eyes and looked at her in doubt. He knew something of the singing master. "What would a splendid young thing like this have to say to that beast Ermanetti?" he thought.

"Who teaches you now?" he asked. "Nobody at present," she returned.

"You are making a grave mistake," he said.

She looked at him quickly. "Why?" she demanded.

"Your voice is immature as yet," he made answer. "If you try to form it yourself you will get into faults of style and production you can never abandon. I judge you haven't been singing very long under a modern master."

"Not more than a year," she returned.

"There's plenty of time," he said cheerily. He looked at her shrewdly. "I suppose you know, or Ermanetti has told you, that you sing rather coldly."

Her flush told him that Ermanetti had, indeed, made a point of this. He guessed fairly well the manner in which he had done it.

"I know Ermanetti's reputation well enough," he said, "to guess what he told you."

"I hate him!" she cried angrily.

"I wouldn't," he said carelessly. "Why not pity him, instead? A man would rather be hated by a pretty girl than pitied. Never was there anything more misleading than the old adage about pity being akin to love. Ermanetti told you probably—it's the usual thing, you know, to tell girls so—that love would bring it."

"Of course, that is mere nonsense," she said loftily.

"It may be," he returned, "but it might help. You're a convent-bred girl, and I never yet knew one that hadn't evolved from her subconsciousness some heroic being—her Prince Charming. Try to sing to your Prince Charming who dwells in the clouds. I don't suppose you'll ever meet him, because we're none of us in the Prince Charming class, whichever way you view us; but you'll never be a great singer if you can't force yourself to feel the roles you sing."

She was silent for a few moments. She had always felt a certain awkwardness at singing some of the passionate love songs which formed part of her repertoire. They expressed sentiments to which she was a stranger. There

had been very little room in her life to think much about love.

"Doesn't one always do that?" she asked.

"You don't," he returned. "I'm sure you could if you wanted. Every fiber in your body and soul call out for color, and yet you won't let your voice express it."

A sudden suspicion occurred to her; he had spoken for the first time vehemently. But she concluded that her experience with Ermanetti must have led her to misjudge men who were honorable. His next advice confirmed her in his good faith. She sighed a little. "Sometimes I think I ought to have taken up something else."

"Don't think of it," he returned. "You can sing, and you will sing much better. You've plenty of time, and all the ambition you need."

"I know—I know," she said. "But I must have someone who understands my voice. It sounds conceited, but I don't think Ermanetti did."

"He has made his name by training heavier voices," admitted Lowndes. "Haven't you ever thought of Bonmarais, of Paris?"

"I wrote to him from Richmond," she replied. "He sent me a curt note saying that he would have no vacancies for ten years. And now I couldn't afford his charges."

"I believe you could," the man returned quietly. "He doesn't charge as much as Ermanetti, even."

"But he has no vacancies," she protested.

"A mere phrase," he answered. "A year or so ago, when I was in Paris, I happened to do Bonmarais a good turn. He considers it as a kind of debt which he must pay, but not with money. As it happens, there is nothing that Bonmarais can do for me unless you want to go there as his pupil. I know perfectly well that I have only to suggest it and the thing's done. You see," continued Lowndes carelessly, "you would be under no obligation to him or to me."

"I'm sure I should be," cried the girl impetuously.

"Absolutely none," he insisted. "Bonmarais would be relieved at having paid what he considers a debt, and I should be relieved of his Gallic profuseness; and you would have a master who would understand your voice. If you like I will send a letter off by *La Provence*, which sails early tomorrow. I'll get him to let you have a list of suitable *pensions*. Shall I?"

"I shall be tremendously grateful if you will," she said. "I can't tell you how happy the prospect makes me. I feel it is my only salvation. But won't Paris be very expensive?" She thought of her dwindling fortune.

"You can get in a fair *pension* for four and a half francs a day," he said. "It's absurdly cheap after New York."

Hilary Lowndes rose to his feet and held out his hand. "I shall be glad if I can help you," he said, smiling pleasantly. "And some day, if I am in Paris, I shall hope to see you and hear you sing. Good-bye."

II

A FEW weeks later a letter came from Monsieur Hippolyte Bonmarais. He would be delighted, he wrote, to number her among his pupils. If she would present herself at his house on the afternoon of the first Monday in September he would have the pleasure of introducing her to Madame Bonmarais and many of her future fellow students. He confided to her discretion not to mention that he had two prices—one for the rich dilettanti of America and England, and another for those students who had to make their way in the world. His terms were so much lower than she had dreamed of, and the list of *pensions* disclosed rates so very cheap that her financial status was one she could now view with content.

During the May and June that followed her engagement at the Lowndes house she did very well. Three of Mrs. Lowndes's friends engaged her, and at one of their homes she saw Hilary

Lowndes again. To her effusive thanks he would not listen. His manner was so impersonal and cold that at first she felt she had received a rebuff; but when she thought over it she was glad. It proved, so she thought, that his interest had been the passing whim of a rich amateur for a poor little struggling professional. She told herself very sagely that it was better so.

She came of a long line of spend-thrifts; and at each of her little triumphs of economy she felt justified in commemorating the occasion with something that cost more than what she had saved. It was in one of these joyous moods that she came upon the attractive travel booklet of a trip through Italy and Switzerland. She read how she could travel by the Italian Line to Genoa, journey through Tuscany, make a descent on Rome and pass through Switzerland by way of Milan and the lakes and finally reach Paris by the first Monday in September. Although it was really more than she could afford, she argued that her mind needed travel's broadening influence. In any case, she would have to subsist during July and August. To prove to herself that she was of a truly provident spirit she was content to take a second cabin passage. It was not to her taste to find a rope barring approach to the fairer decks where the saloon passengers walked, sat and played games, and she could never care for a heavy midday meal, but the life on shipboard was novel and interesting and her acquaintances were pleasant enough.

She found in Italy the country of her dreams. All the rioting color she had missed greeted her, smiled on her enthusiasm and enchanted her. For the first time a radiant joy of living took possession of her, and the troubled introspection which had resulted from her lonely life and gloomy childhood deserted her. She was able to live economically and yet see Italy's art treasures. Toward the end of her first month she found herself at the charming seaside town of Abetone. It was pleasure enough to bathe in the

violet sea and sit in the sun, that warmed her Southern blood. There were dances at the hotel and the usual holiday festivities, but she was too much charmed with the place and its atmosphere to seek to enter into them.

Florence was the next city on her list. When she came to tip the porter who had brought her baggage to the station, she made the discovery that her little book of travelers' cheques had been stolen, together with the through ticket to Paris. The station master was sympathetic but could do nothing. He advised her to see her consul in Florence. What money she had in small change paid her fare to that city and left her with fifteen lire.

The consul gave her cold comfort. The Abetone police could offer no help. The servants at her hotel were interrogated and their belongings searched, but nothing had been learned which pointed to a solution of the very usual kind of theft. "If you care to call this evening I may have better news," he said, "but I fear nothing will be recovered." He looked coldly at her when she told him that she had no idea on what banks her cheques were drawn. She could only remember that she had procured them at an express office in lower Broadway. The consul thought the story a very lame one. There was nothing when she called later, and, very badly frightened, she sat down to a frugal supper in the cheap little room she had secured.

Florence in August is no place for the tourist. The palaces and villas are closed, and the wealthy Florentines seek the shelter of the hotels of Camaldoli or Precchia. Occasionally the tourist of the genus who, in the space of ten days, sees all Italy has to offer, passes through, but the Cascine waits until the cold weather comes for its throngs of fashionable folks.

When Daphne, after her bitter hour, sat at one of the little metal-topped tables at the Gambirinus with a cup of coffee before her, she gained the attention of the townspeople, who during the summer months have their city to themselves. It was plain that

she was of the class which makes the Florentine shopkeeper's heart glad, and yet, like themselves, she was sitting unattended—and in August. She observed their scrutiny, but it was not offensive. She was less comfortable under the glances of two men who sat at a distant table and looked at her continually. When her coffee was finished she rose to go, determined upon a walk before going to her unattractive room.

As she left her chair the two men rose and went out. The smaller wore a short grayish brown beard. He had a dull red complexion and stared owlishly through gold-rimmed glasses. He was not well dressed, she could see, but evidently of the tourist class. The other man, taller and fuller in face and figure, held himself erect, and had hair which was overlong and curled at the ends. She had seen hundreds of his kind sunning themselves on Broadway during the months of the theatrical season. She guessed them to be Americans. But their glances had been neither those of fellow countrymen pleased at the sight of a traveler of their own nationality, nor the stare of admiration to which pretty girls without escort must submit. They looked at her rather with the impersonal glances of men who were weighing her worth to them in some predestined venture.

But for the moment her own pressing monetary worries absorbed all her thinking energies and she forgot them. She strode rapidly over the Ponte Vecchi, no longer the haunt of eager, cajoling jewelers with their imitation *cinquecento* wares, and sat down by the Arno. It was the one walk that she had during her miserable day become familiar with. It was a walk which a week ago she had longed to take. Then it had pleased her to know that by the six-bridged Arno Dante had walked weaving verses to his Beatrice, and Petrarch had sung his immortal sonnets to Laura.

Tonight it was all strangely inhospitable. The shuttered palaces, the dark shadowy corners, made more black by

contrast with the occasional glimpses of moonlight, almost frightened her. She had wandered on for some time when she remembered having heard that the Lung Arno is not safe by night to such as look prosperous and walk alone. And almost as she thought of it, she stopped, and became conscious at that moment of steps behind her which stopped almost at the moment that hers did. But she was not given to cowardice, and she turned to see who her pursuers might be. In a little circle of moonlight she saw, with something of relief, that they were the two strangers who had stared so hard at her.

The shorter of the two stepped forward and raised his hat awkwardly. "Excuse me," he said, "but I have a business proposition to make to you."

"I don't see how that can be," she replied coldly, "since we do not know each other." She gave the smallest inclination of her head and was turning to pass them when the bearded man made a gesture of entreaty.

"Please hear me," he said. "Indeed I am serious in what I say. I was until recently an elder in the Bellcourt Baptist Temple in Brooklyn."

"Indeed!" returned the girl, with the lack of interest that Manhattan often assumes toward the affairs of the transpentine city. "I don't see how that affects me."

The taller man took off his seedy hat with a flourish. "My friend," he said, indicating the other, "does not expect you to find him in 'Who's Who' on that account. He seeks to show you that he is of probity and standing in the community, despite adverse conditions which surround him at the present moment."

"It's gospel truth," said the small man earnestly. "You may trust me fully."

"But I don't wish to trust you," snapped the girl.

"But you must," he returned — "for your own interests. I know your name, where you live and why you live there."

"You are from the consul?" she

cried, a gleam of hope in her face. "Has he heard from the Abetone police again?"

"We've nothing to do with the consul," he replied; "and you will certainly never hear from the police nor get your money back. We happen to know that you're practically down and out, and we can give you the opportunity to earn a few hundred dollars. You can earn them in a perfectly proper way. Now do you care to listen to our proposition?"

"Not now," she said. "Tomorrow morning, perhaps."

"Good!" cried the man with the beard. "My name is Aiken—Lemuel Aiken; and my friend, Lewis Spann, was formerly a matinee idol."

Mr. Spann removed his hat with an ample gesture, "Madam," he said, "I should be too sparing of the truth if I did not admit that he was right. I was a matinee idol. There are picture postals of me in every girl's collection. That I am an expatriate is due to an artistic sense that would not bow the knee to Mammon. I am he who defied the Trust. They tried to banish me to Jersey; to break my spirit by a succession of one night stands. I said to them, 'Broadway or nothing'—"

"So you got nothing," interrupted the girl unkindly. "I see." She turned to the ex-elder. "When will you call?"

"At nine-thirty prompt tomorrow," he said. "Good night."

"Addio," exclaimed Lewis Spann.

When she had passed out of sight Aiken wiped a forehead that glistened. "I'm not what you may call a nervous man," he said slowly. "When my fellow elders held a meeting to discuss the deficit in the building fund of which I was treasurer, I walked into the room boldly. In Brooklyn I had my reputation to fall back upon. Here I am a passportless tourist, with only fifty lire, and unable to speak any language but United States."

"Reputation!" laughed Spann softly. "Reputation! But what makes you so sure of getting the girl?"

"Because up till now she's never been

within sight of starvation or charity. I tell you with respectable people such a position raises a panic. I know what I'm talking about. Her money was stolen; that much I learned by accident at the station in Abetone when I first set eyes on her. I know by the look in her eyes that she's in desperate straits. If not, she would cable home for money and stay at the Grand. It's in her face, I tell you. I've seen it in my own every day for three months, and I can't mistake it."

By this time they had reached the modest hotel which lodged them. Spann bowed with courtly grace. "I salute," he said, "a more complete scoundrel than ever I can hope to be. Until the morn, *addio*."

The fact that Daphne had consented to see Aiken was due, as he had hinted, to her absolute horror of the penury which was, unless something happened, to be her lot. She had no jewelry to sell, and clothes at second hand prices bring little. Had she been in an American town there might have been some opening to be found, but here there was nothing. She found, when she offered herself as an instructor in English, that there were many established teachers of languages. The only agent she could find told her that Florence lived only when the wealthy residents returned to it. If she had possessed the money to cable, there was no one to whom she had any right to appeal. She owed too many things already to Mr. Tate, the Richmond attorney, to ask him; and she was conscious that during her busy year in New York she had not written to him or his daughters as she should. More bitterly than she had ever done, she experienced a great loneliness at her position as the last figure of an ancient house. But there was good fighting blood in the Eltons, and Aiken, when he came, felt he must have imagined the fears he had seemed to see in her face the night before on the Arno. She was thankful that he was alone.

"I am not," he commenced, "given to idle speech like Mr. Spann, but I'm not exaggerating when I say that I am

going to give you the chance to earn five hundred dollars and get back to New York in comfort." He glanced at her room and its furniture with scorn. She looked at him searchingly. He labored under evident excitement, and she would have been a dull girl not to guess that it was in her power to perform a service that was vitally important to him. In a measure it gave her confidence to realize this. "What is it?" she demanded.

"I may speak confidentially?" he asked.

She nodded. "I am not likely to betray you or your plans."

"Have you ever heard of a certain Countess Vera Olgatsky?"

She thought for a moment and the name came back to her. She had heard of the Russian as a great beauty, a great spendthrift and a cosmopolite who held her court in all the great capitals. Monte Carlo knew her as one of its greatest gamblers.

"I have read of her," she answered guardedly. "Why?"

"I am her confidential agent in a very important matter. It is important to me, but very much more so to her."

"What has Mr. Spann to do with it?" she asked.

"I'll be absolutely frank with you," said Aiken. "Spann is in it because he was, before this stage fever struck him, a lawyer in good standing in New York. Years ago, when I was company promoting, he did business for me, and if he'd only stick at law he could make a name, but he's too lazy. This Continental Bohemianism suits him too well."

"But how can you two be serving her?" objected the girl.

"Her affairs are in a very bad way," retorted Aiken. "She is in the position of having to sell some property near Kars by the Black Sea. Her own Petersburg men of business would take a month to start. By chance I heard of it, wrote to her, and found a purchaser in a New Yorker who has done a great deal of speculation in oil. This Russian property is just an oil

speculation. Spann has drawn up the necessary transfer papers, and the New Yorker, or his agent empowered to act for him, is already on the Atlantic. He's a shrewd buyer, is Stanford, and if he guesses how hardly she's pressed he won't give her what she asks. That's business, you understand. The matter is to be decided this coming week in Milan. Directly her signature is affixed to the deed the money will be forthcoming." He commenced upon certain technical matters connected with transference of property which Daphne waved impatiently aside.

"That is beyond me," she exclaimed. "I am anxious to know what I can do."

Aiken hesitated a moment. "Miss Elton," he said, "I guess we've got to take you right into our confidence, and we've got to rely on your sense of honor not to tell. At the present moment the Countess is in a little villa at Como stupefied by the accursed drug called Indian hemp. Every year she spends more and more time at this little house, which she calls 'Mon Retraite,' and remains there until she's free of the influence. Instead of coming on here the day before yesterday, as she arranged, she went to Como; and that means never less than two straight weeks of it. When Stanford comes she'll be lying stupefied or raving, as the fit takes her, and the deal will be off. I shall lose, and Spann will lose, and she'll lose a thousand times more than we together. Stanford is not a man to be played with. He'll declare the deal off, and Spann and I'll be practically in the same position as you are now—broke."

There was no doubt in her mind as to his absolute sincerity.

"But you haven't yet told me," she urged, "what I am to do."

For answer he handed her a large photograph of a woman magnificently gowned. "Do you recognize that?" he demanded.

"I have never seen it before," she returned.

"With a few differences in the way of doing the hair and a few years taken

off, it might do very passably for you. It's the Countess."

She looked at it more intently. What he said was true. The haughty face that looked back at her was strikingly like what she, if the years were kind to her, might become. Aiken leaned forward and spoke rapidly and low. "We want you to impersonate her for a few minutes."

"It would be fraud!" cried the girl. "And I should be found out! She is much older than I."

"You would not be found out," said the man. "As to age, Spann, with a few touches from his make-up box, could make you the thirty-five years that the Almanach de Gotha gives her."

"But the fraud," she persisted, "the danger of doing it—"

"I'm not pretending that it is quite in order," he told her. "In fact, it isn't. If it were not out of the ordinary do you think you would have this chance to right yourself and get out of Florence? As it is, if you choose to back out of it, you will probably get into trouble with the authorities as an undesirable alien."

He saw her face turn white as his savage thrust went home.

"I don't want to frighten you," he said more genially. "I want you to look at it from another point of view. Here's the Countess, woman in the same need, relatively, as you are. Instead of keeping her head, she takes to Indian hemp. If you don't come to her help she'll lose a great opportunity, one which I don't think will ever come again. It's a case of one woman helping another who's in trouble. You aren't defrauding anyone of a cent. Stanford offers the price; the Countess has accepted. I'm bankrupt if you don't agree to this, and Spann has just enough money to get home to New York."

"What will she say if she finds out?"

"She *will* find out," cried Aiken briskly. "I shall tell her, and if I know anything about her at all she'll live up to her reputation for generosity."

"I was not thinking of her generosity," said Daphne, flushing.

"She'll do anything for you if she takes a fancy to you," he returned. "When Miss Vivart left to be married in the spring she gave her a magnificent trousseau. She was the lady who sang and played to the Countess at twenty dollars a week and all expenses. Do you sing or play?" he demanded.

"I'm a professional," she said. "At least, I'm studying toward that end."

"Great luck!" said Aiken, smiling for the first time. "Why shouldn't you take her place? It isn't filled yet."

A wave of hope surged through his hearer. To be able to earn her money legitimately was all she asked. "If only I could!" she sighed.

"I'll do all I can," he said. "You leave it to me. I take it you're with her and me in this business?" He held out his hand and smiled almost kindly. "Give me your hand on it."

He had put the matter in so favorable a light that the idea of wrongdoing was banished from her mind. His sophistries had not wholly deceived her, and she was prepared for a task that might not be altogether pleasant, but it was the means to gain her enough money to get to Paris. Five hundred dollars would be twenty-five hundred francs. She reckoned that this should keep her in Paris for more than a year. At a year's end what golden dreams might not be fulfilled!

Aiken apparently took her assent for granted. She was to meet him at the station at five, when they would go to Milan, where negotiations were to be conducted. He explained that it would be better to arrive in the Lombard capital late and proceed unobserved to the hotel the Countess had chosen.

III

THE rooms which had been engaged in the quiet, aristocratic hotel were not in the name of the Countess. In the register the girl was told by Aiken to sign as Madame de Kars of Paris. He told her that the Countess, to avoid any notoriety, took this as a *nom de guerre*. There might be those in Milan

who would remember her, and she was especially anxious that no rumor of the sale of her property should appear in the Continental press.

This, in view of what she had already learned, seemed so entirely reasonable that Daphne evinced no surprise. And it seemed in keeping with the imperious ways of the aristocrat she was to personate to take her meals alone in the dining room of her suite. Aiken told her very firmly that she would not be allowed to mix with the other guests of the hotel. If she wished to earn her five hundred dollars she must obey him implicitly. When, therefore, he told her to accompany him on a matter of business, she climbed into the *vettura* with him and drove toward the business section. "I hear," he said, "in a letter from the Countess's maid, that there is no likelihood of her getting here in time to meet Stanford. And as the draft which should have been sent on here for our expenses is not signed, you had better indorse it."

"I don't like the idea, at all," she said decidedly. "You said nothing about my having to do that sort of thing."

"How did I know the need would arise?" he said. "It's inevitable, unless you happen to be in a position to refund me the fare from Florence and the expenses you have already incurred at the hotel."

When the carriage stopped before the Banca Commerciale Italiana, Spann was waiting. Telling them not to dismount, he took the seat opposite the girl and handed her a heavy motor veil. "I think it is wiser," he said.

"Now," he exclaimed, when she had put it on, "all you have to do is to sign your name. While you are doing this the teller will glance at the most flattering photograph the Countess possesses and we shall receive the money. The signature, which he does not know, is simple—merely 'Vera Stephanie Olgatsky.'" He repeated the name three times distinctly. "Wait here," he said to Aiken.

The girl glanced toward the other man. "Aren't you coming?" she

asked. She preferred him to the ex-player.

"I don't speak any languages," he returned. "Spann speaks French and Italian like a native."

The process of getting the money was exceedingly simple. The deep deference Spann showed toward her was exactly what the banker had expected; and the dislike of him, which she could hardly control, seemed the incarnation of aristocratic hauteur.

On his way back to the hotel Aiken's manner was almost jocular.

"I don't want to keep you a prisoner entirely," he said, "but I want you to remember that if you go out you must be attended and must not speak English. The Countess doesn't speak a word of it; all my business has to go through Spann." He looked a trifle sourly at the man opposite, who was smoking an expensive cigar. "I suggest that if you want to see the city Mr. Spann will escort you. He knows Milan well."

"My young countrywoman," said Spann, waving his white hand, "you may have every confidence in me. Although no guileless church has bidden me be its elder, I, too, have my reputation. I have gamboled with the lambs, and the Friars know me well."

Daphne had made up her mind that Mr. Spann did not interest her particularly. He was a good-looking man and possessed of some refinement, but suffered from the fixed illusion that all women under forty had fallen victims to his charm of diction and person.

On the afternoon of the second day the two came out of the Church of Santa Maria della Grazia. The girl was beautiful in her enthusiasm over Leonardo da Vinci's glorious "Last Supper," and chatted with less reserve to her escort than she had ever done. Spann had been warned by Aiken not to rouse any antagonism on the girl's part, and he had studiously endeavored to carry out his instructions. But she was exceedingly pretty and a countrywoman in a strange land. He felt that touch of sentimentality which he

was wont to say is part of the artistic temperament. He drew her arm tenderly within his own.

"My dear child," he exclaimed reproachfully, as she resisted this movement, "consider me for the time being as an elder brother or a trusted cousin, and the guardian of your welfare."

"Thank you," she retorted frigidly. "I have neither brother nor cousin."

"Then let us begin by being close friends," he said urbanely. "Here is the English Tea Shoppe; let us drink tea together in amity."

He preceded her up the narrow aisle of the shop toward a table in a distant corner. Arrived at his destination, he pulled out a chair for her, and turned about to find that she was not there, and that he himself was the cynosure of unfriendly eyes which had marked his discomfiture.

A certain sense of uneasiness had been troubling Daphne. That so large a sum as five hundred dollars should be offered her unless for some very great service was not to be thought of for a moment. And the service which, were Aiken's words true, she was to perform was surely not worth so much. What troubled her more than anything was her absolutely dependent position, her utter inability to leave Italy unless she earned sufficient money. Although it did not please her to think that she was bound for the time to Aiken and Spann, she had no particular dread of them. Aiken was laboring under anxieties which would have left him unmoved were he surrounded by all the showgirls of New York. As for Spann, she knew that so long as she chose to assume even a faint curiosity in his histrionic abilities he would discourse for hours. She had met many men who frightened her more than the ex-player. She had run away, not so much because his company was actively distasteful, as for the reason that she suddenly felt she must be alone to think. It had always been her custom when worried to take long walks, and she accordingly set out in brisk fashion in a southerly

direction, little caring where she went. She would walk until tired and then take a car back, or even one of the cheap carriages that are found everywhere in Italian cities.

After a time she found herself in a sparsely inhabited district to the east of the workman's quarter, where apparently no car tracks were laid. She asked some women the way, but since the art of concise direction is mastered by few, she grew more than ever confused. Presently two men and an ill favored woman passed and eyed her closely. She had the appearance of affluence not often seen in the district. They were polite in their answers, and pointed out a road which they assured her would bring her to her destination. But it soon narrowed into an ill kept lane leading to a district meaner than that she was leaving. The two men and the woman were following her closely, and she remembered that highway robbery flourished still in the outskirts of Italian towns.

As this unsoothing reflection came to her, she turned a corner in the lane and almost ran into a tall man, who was standing lighting his pipe. From his dress and general appearance she knew he must be American or English. "Oh, please," she cried, out of breath, "which is the direction back to the city? I have lost my way."

"I'm in the same plight myself," he returned, smiling. "I looked at the map and thought I had figured the route out, but I'm lost, all the same." He glanced at the two men and the woman, who were loitering slowly toward them. "If you speak their language these people will tell us. Unfortunately I'm no linguist myself."

"I think they deliberately told me wrong," she answered. "I was getting fearfully nervous at the way they followed me, when I came upon you."

"I suppose we'd better walk until we find a carriage," he suggested. "If they told you to go this way, we can't do better than go diametrically opposite. I hope you won't be nerv-

ous," he added. "I've a little automatic pistol in my pocket."

"I'm not frightened with a fellow countryman," she said. "But I was really horridly alarmed until I met you."

In height her companion was two inches over six feet and broad of shoulder. His age might be twenty-five and he had the blond coloring which was not accompanied by a red face and light eyelashes. She thought him handsome, and admitted that his manner was frank and engaging, but intuitively adopted the reserve which she had proved to be a useful weapon. Her experiences with men had not been happy. Until she left her convent she had never spoken twenty words to a man under forty. At Richmond she met a number who attempted to flirt in their several manners. In New York she had been followed in the streets and spoken to in street cars until her pristine ideas as to men's chivalry had undergone much change. She was, indeed, rather too apt to act upon the defensive, and to think hardly of all to the wronging of a few. She realized as she walked toward Milan that here was another man thrown into her company who would require to be kept at regulation distance.

There never yet lived a daughter of Eve who did not know when she was exciting admiration in her companion when that companion was a man. The tall young man let his pipe go out and applied himself to rapid thinking. Here was a girl, most certainly a lady, and probably, from her dress and appearance, the daughter of wealthy parents, who for ten minutes or so in his life was destined to walk by his side, and in the ordinary course of events would pass out of it to be seen no more. He was suddenly filled with a sense of the injustice of such an arrangement. He wanted to know her name, her place of residence and when he could see her again. He rehearsed in his mind some fluent, matter-of-fact sentences which would extract the necessary information in a manner devoid of offense.

"My name, by the way," he said carelessly, "is Dunstan—Norman Dunstan of New York."

"I am very grateful for your protection, Mr. Dunstan," she returned.

This was not what he had expected. He subsided into silence and listened to her description of the pictures she had seen.

"If you haven't seen them," she said, "you really must."

"I should like to," he returned. "But so far I haven't had much time. I suppose you've done the Cathedral thoroughly?"

"I spent an hour in it this morning," she told him.

"An hour!" he repeated. "One hour in the third biggest cathedral in the world! You can't go back to New York and tell your friends that; they'd laugh at you. You were reproaching me just now because I hadn't seen the pictures in the Palazzo de Brera. I said I hadn't had time."

"Why not?" she demanded.

"I was doing the Cathedral thoroughly," he said seriously. "Inside and out."

"Outside?" she queried.

"The best of all," he said. "The outside is gorgeous. Hundreds of saints on pinnacles, and a spire by Carlo Borromeo."

"It sounds delightful," she observed, calmly hailing a passing *vettura*.

"Where shall I tell the man?" he said, climbing in after her.

"The corner of—" she hesitated.

"Oh, I'll tell him."

She spoke quickly to the driver and too low for him to hear.

It seemed only a few moments when the man pulled up and she stepped out.

"It was awfully kind of you," she said. "I really believe I should have been murdered if you hadn't lost your way, too."

"I was going to talk to you about the Cathedral," he began lamely.

"I thought you did," she observed. "You talked almost eloquent over saints and spires."

"You ought to see them, too," he urged.

"I shall," she returned.

"I wish you'd let me show them to you," he said quickly. "I'm better than any guide in all Milan."

"I couldn't think of troubling you," she said decisively, "or of taking up your time."

"It wouldn't be trouble," he cried eagerly. "And I have already planned to go there tomorrow morning."

"I never met a keener archeologist!" she laughed.

"There are two thousand marble statues," he returned brightly, "and naturally they take a long time. If"—his voice had a note of entreaty in it—"if you should happen to be passing that way tomorrow I shall be delighted to guide you. I am going to make a sketch of the main entrance, so I shall see you if you come." There was something so respectful in his manner, although she knew he was deeply in earnest, that she told herself this was why the idea did not prove distasteful to her. "Will you?" he asked.

"I'm afraid I shan't be able to," she answered. "But then, of course, one never knows; I might be seized with a spirit of research. I might even want to soar among the spires and saints."

"You owe it to your country," he averred solemnly.

She looked at him with a smile. "Will you answer me one question truthfully?"

"A hundred," he cried eagerly.

"This one will do," she returned.

"Can you sketch?"

He looked at her a little shamefacedly. "No," he returned, "I can't."

He cursed his inability to read the expression that crossed her face as he admitted this. She had led him into a trap; she had forced him to convict himself of a lie. And worse than all, he had done it clumsily and had probably thoroughly disgusted her. Gloomily he drove to the hotel and ate his cheerless, lonely dinner.

Daphne was not without some fear that the angry Aiken, rendered anxious by her defection, would be waiting for her in an unpleasant mood. She was

reassured by seeing Spann smoking in the hotel lounge. He greeted her amiably.

"It was not kindly done," he said, "to leave me to be the gibe of tea drinkers."

"I needed fresh air," she said penitently, "and not tea. How many cups did you drink?"

"Like Dr. Johnson," he told her, "I drank it by the pot and did not measure it in cups. It assuages thirst without disturbing my business abilities, which are needed."

"Does Mr. Aiken know?" she demanded.

"I have not told him," he returned; "but you and I must have some explanation. If we go out tomorrow, we must return together, which does not necessarily mean that we need be in one another's company all day. In point of fact," he said airily, "I made the acquaintance a few hours since of two fellow countrymen, who remember me when I trod the boards and could not pick up a magazine without meeting my own portrait there. They suggested a little game of poker tomorrow at a quiet café. I am to meet them at ten. If you want to look at the shops or the pictures, you can have the whole morning, so long as you meet me here at one. Aiken fumes and frets in his foolish manner if he thinks there is any risk in anything. He wants a royal flush in every hand. He has no right to question anything I do, but I want him to keep what little nerve he has for some future speculation we shall engage in. Not a word to him about the poker game."

"It suits me very well," she returned.

Aiken at this moment joined them. "Not a line from Stanford yet," he said anxiously.

"All in good time," said Spann, moving leisurely toward the bar.

Aiken looked after him, frowning. "That's not my type of man," he said. "I wouldn't associate with him for a minute if he didn't know more about company law than I do. I thank heaven that I have never wasted my money in smoking or drinking." Spann,

his refreshment consumed, joined them again, and Aiken walked to the hotel office to ask about his mail.

Spann gazed after him, a smile of pity irradiating his full face. "I drink," he said; "I smoke the best cigars I can afford, and I play a pretty game at poker. That bearded pard denounces all three, and yet, my dear young lady, I'm an innocent, gambling lambkin compared with him."

"This is not very reassuring," she said, frowning.

"It won't affect you," he said.

"When it pays him to run straight, he moves in a bee line."

IV

At a quarter to ten Daphne and Lewis Spann started out together. When out of sight of the hotel they parted, the erstwhile matinee idol to a profitable morning with his new friends and the girl to gaze in the shop windows. She quickly tired of this and found herself in the Piazza del Duomo facing the masterpiece of the unknown architect.

She had never before experienced quite the same feeling of nervousness as was upon her when she passed slowly by the great entrance, nor had she ever felt a certain diffidence as to her actions. Heretofore she had done what she wanted without heeding the effect upon anyone else. Now suddenly she found herself wondering whether Norman Dunstan only hoped she would come, or whether he had really expected it. If she did not go, was there not, she argued, some justification of a charge of ingratitude? But for his aid she might have been robbed or even murdered. She took a few steps in the direction of the porch, to be stayed with another reflection. Would he not, she asked herself, think very little of her if she accepted the invitation of a man of whom she knew nothing? His name might be an assumed one. It was possible that he would consider the episode only as an amusing one to retail to his friends when he had

left Europe. She paused, irresolution on her face, when he darted out of the church and came to her side. "It's awfully good of you to come," he said gratefully.

"How do you know I wasn't just passing by?" she demanded.

His face fell. "Were you?" he asked dismally.

"It might even be," she exclaimed, "that I was conscious of the duty you said I owed to my country."

Together they passed into the great fane, its roof supported by fifty-two beautiful columns, and presently stopped before the eleventh century sarcophagus of Archbishop Aribert.

"Now," said Daphne magisterially, "to what period does this tomb belong?"

He hesitated, stammered and was lost. "I don't know," he admitted.

In the opposite aisle she pointed to Baroccio's altarpiece. "Who painted it?"

"*Mea culpa!*" he confessed. "I am the authority on the exterior; I shine on the roof."

"Like the sun," she laughed. "Let us go where you can redeem yourself."

He purchased tickets for the roof, and after the long climb stood with her among the spires. It was a perfect morning; the air was still, the light good, and away in the distance they could see St. Gothard and the Bernese Alps. He took binoculars from his pocket and handed them to her. "There's Monte Rosa," he said, "and I think you'll be able to make out Mont Blanc, too."

"Aren't they gorgeous?" she ejaculated. "It's my first view of the Alps. They look all crimson and gold."

"I suppose you'll be crossing them soon?" he asked.

"I hope so," she answered.

He noticed a momentary frown pass over her face. "You don't seem to look forward to it," he hazarded.

"I ought to," she returned; "Paris is my Mecca."

He checked his instant inclination to tell her that business would take him to Paris within a week; she might not

entertain a great respect for his accuracy.

"Are you ready for your lecture on the saints?" she asked.

"It's much pleasanter to sit here and look at the Alps," he answered. "One doesn't often get these clear mornings."

"I believe it's merely an excuse, Mr. Dunstan," she said, "but I'm not very much interested in saints this morning."

"So you are going to Paris," he said, taking a seat on the parapet at her side. "Why do all women love to go shopping in Paris?"

"I'm going there to work, not to shop," she said. "I have to work for my living."

"So do I," he said. "But it isn't at sketching, as perhaps yours might be."

"If you want to know," she observed, "mine is singing, or trying to."

"Mine is engineering," he said. "I took a course at Columbia to please my uncle, who promised me I should become his secretary."

"Secretary!" she said, a little disappointed. "Isn't that rather an easy position—the sort of billet craved by men who don't want to work?"

"Not with my uncle," he said. "He's the hardest, most suspicious man in America. He says if I stick to him I shall never regret it; but he makes me work overtime."

"On the roof of Milan Cathedral?"

Dunstan laughed. "I'm obeying orders just the same. I'm to receive instructions some time this week, and then I shall have to go to Paris and London. I don't think he's got a whole lot of faith in me yet, although he has trusted me more than anyone else."

During the time that they sat high above the city facing the distant mountains he grew unusually communicative. As an orphan child, he told her, he had been adopted by a wealthy uncle and brought up as his heir. He had few relatives, and awoke a responsive echo in her heart by saying that he often envied his friends their family life. "I've no one," he concluded, "but my uncle, and I don't know him a bit."

When I got my diploma at Columbia he just grunted. When I captained the football team at Princeton he just grunted. Sometimes I think he hasn't any sort of use for me."

"He wouldn't have adopted you if he hadn't," she objected.

"My mother was the only being he will confess to having been fond of. I think that's the reason."

She felt a sense of kinship with him. There had been many bitter hours when she had deplored the love and sympathy which she had seen in homes she had visited. It was with something of regret that she saw it was half past twelve. She had enjoyed the morning, and felt a confidence in him and a liking for his cheery smile.

He walked to the corner where on the evening before she had left the carriage. He mustered up courage to ask her where she was staying.

"At a hotel," she answered. "I like it better than a *pension*; one has more privacy."

He was plainly discouraged at this answer, as she held out her hand in farewell. He saw in it a hint that their friendship was not to progress further.

"What are you doing this afternoon?" he demanded.

"Why are you anxious to know?"

"Because," he entreated, "I wondered if you would take pity on me and explain some of the pictures and curios in the Museo Poldi-Pezzoli. I can't read Italian, and I must improve my mind. Take pity on a poor fellow American. If you won't let me call for you, will you meet me at the museum? It's in the Via Morone. You surely don't want me to disgrace my country in Paris or London by being thought hopelessly ignorant."

"I suspect you very strongly of being a fraud," she laughed.

"Then you'll come?" he said, his face brightening.

"That's rather a free translation of my answer, isn't it?" she queried.

"I didn't say so."

"But *will* you?"

In the distance she could see Spann

coming toward her with lordly tread. She was far from wishing that her new friend should see him. She had the desire that he should think well of her, and Spann, his face flushed with liquor and wearing long hair, might require some explaining; and explanation was the one thing she must in honor withhold.

He could not conjecture the cause of her sudden frown. He feared he had asked of her an unwarrantable thing.

"Then you won't come?" he exclaimed dismally.

"I didn't say so," she cried, laughing. "Good-bye, Mr. Dunstan."

She waited in the hotel doorway for Spann and entered the *loggia* with him. Aiken was waiting in the splendid apartment allotted to Madame de Kars.

He looked at Spann vindictively. "You've been drinking," he snapped.

"O righteous judge, O excellent young man!" returned the other amiably. "And if I have, I paid for it." He took out a handful of money. In it were several twenty-lira bills and one of a hundred. "Gaze on my honest gains."

Aiken looked at him in horror. "You were never fool enough to risk changing that American money here?" he demanded.

"I faint from hunger," said Spann. "If at lunch you care to converse pleasantly and without heat, I shall be glad to talk."

Aiken walked angrily from the room and Spann turned to the girl. "My child," he said, "never wholly trust a non-smoker and a non-drinker." He walked to the door, which Aiken had left open, and shut it. "My new friends," he continued, "wish for their revenge this afternoon. Honor and economy forbid that I should deny them; and if we leave this hostelry together and meet at five, our unpleasant friend need be none the wiser. In confidence I may say that at present Aiken is treasurer for the Countess; otherwise he would not dare to dictate."

Neither Daphne nor Dunstan carried away from the charming little museum,

housed in a former private residence, any definite ideas of the pictures, antiques and weapons there to be seen. It was very pleasant to receive the confidences of a man whom she liked, and in her turn to tell, without a fear that her listener would laugh at her, the ambitions about her career. He took them as seriously as the girl herself, but was far more sanguine of her success. She had everything in her favor, he contended—looks, carriage and courage. Mary Garden had started just as she, and all Paris rang with her name, and great composers like Charpentier and Debussy wrote operas for her. Daphne found herself greatly encouraged by his optimistic outlook.

"Now," he said, "having seen everything in the building, let's go and have tea somewhere."

"I'd rather have an ice cream," she said. "I know a lovely place."

He found a little table somewhat apart from the others and piloted her to it. "We can talk better here," he explained.

"I told you my name almost directly we met," he said presently. "Do you know why?"

"Perhaps you were so proud of it. Is that the reason?"

"I did it," he returned, "because I hoped you would return the courtesy. I wish you would. You've said you are going to study under Bonmarais in Paris, so you can't evade me. If you don't tell me I shall easily find out."

"How?" she demanded.

"I shall go to old Bonmarais and ask for the name of his prettiest pupil."

"I'm afraid you have a tendency to exaggerate," she laughed. "But, really, Mr. Dunstan," she went on more gravely, "ours is a very unconventional sort of acquaintance. I don't think it's the sort one keeps up."

"It's the only one I ever wanted to," he said decidedly. "And why shouldn't we? I shall be lonely in Paris. Won't you?"

"I have always been lonely," she said simply. "But I have my work. It isn't as though I were sent by my

family and had an allowance and need not do anything if I didn't want to. If I am to exist even, I must work very hard all the time. You will get to know people, but I shall not allow myself to, even if I get the opportunity."

"But you'll tell me your name?" he persisted.

"Elton," she said. "Daphne Elton."

"That's an old Southern name," he returned. "There was a General Gregory Elton who was one of the idols of my boyish days, although my people fought for the North. I had a picture of his last stand at Seven Rivers, where he and his men wouldn't surrender, and were only killed after a fight that wasn't equaled throughout the war." He looked at her with interest. "Is it possible you're a Virginia Elton?"

"He was my grandfather," she said.

"I am the last of the Eltons." She sighed a little as she thought of the great mansion on the James River which had been the Elton home since the seventeenth century. Although she had never known it as a place of early affection and childish joys, the old colored women had told her many tales of the times when no family in America bore itself more proudly.

For his part he was silent, too. What an irony of fate that the last representative of a name renowned in history should have become a poor student of singing, fighting her way through the world almost friendless!

He wished he knew what he could do to help her.

"I am very proud," he said at length, "to have met you, Miss Elton." He looked at her with kindling eyes. "To think you are my hero's grandchild! He was a big man with flashing blue eyes, and was mounted on a great chestnut horse, resisting the attack of a lot of men on foot. I used to cry over it when I was quite a small kid."

"I wish I'd seen it," she said. "There was an old photograph of him at home, but no more."

"I'll get it for you if it exists," he returned. "And having found his granddaughter, I'm certainly not going to lose sight of her. The idea of work-

ing every day of the week at your singing!" He laughed scornfully. "You may be able to paint if you're an invalid, but you certainly can't sing unless you keep in good health. You'll have to take Sunday trips to Fontainebleau, Versailles, Chantilly, Barbizon and the rest."

"I suppose I shall," she admitted.

"Of course," he insisted impetuously. "And if I'm in Paris I shall think it unpatriotic of you not to let me come, too, sometimes. It will be a kindness that one American should charitably do to another."

"But there are other Americans in Paris, too," she reminded him.

"But none lonelier than you and I," he said wistfully. "Really and truly, Miss Elton, I've not had much fun in life. My four years in college represent it all. I try to like my uncle because he was my mother's brother and made my education possible, but as for genuine affection between us—there isn't any." He looked her straight in the eyes. "If, when I get to Paris, I know you'll be glad to see me sometimes, it will make me very happy."

It moved her more than she would have believed possible to know that there was a man who wanted her friendship genuinely and was, too, like herself, not one of a happy family but isolated in the world.

"If happiness is purchased at such a small price," she said, "you may have it."

She was half an hour late in meeting Spann, who walked up and down in front of the hotel uneasily. His face grew less careworn when he saw her slight figure, and took on a look of admiration when he saw how radiant she looked.

"What has happened?" he asked. "You look like a heroine at the end of the fifth act of a melodrama, when the villain has been slain, her character cleared and the hero comes out on top."

She felt herself blushing furiously, but Spann was too eager to tell of his own exploits to think any more of her.

"It wasn't a revenge," he chuckled,

when she asked how he had fared; "it was their Waterloo. Their roll, their carfare, their watches and chains, their *tout ensemble*—never have I had such a killing! Your Uncle Dudley was in form. I think the pots and pots of tea I drank yesterday cleared my brain. Not a word to Aiken! He'll want to borrow."

She had an arrangement to meet Norman Dunstan at two o'clock on the following afternoon, and was not therefore perturbed when Aiken at breakfast told her that Stanford was coming at eleven and she would have the opportunity of earning her money. The thought of action inspirited her and the knowledge that if all went well she would soon be released from her position of dependency acted like champagne.

A conversation in the adjoining room, begun quietly enough but increasing in volume, banished this comfortable mood. She did not know that Spann had gone out the night before with his winnings and lost most of them at a small gambling club, where the roulette wheel stopped more often from design than accident. He had been drinking to steady himself, and Aiken's increasing remonstrance had made him thoroughly angry.

"Damn you," she heard him say, "take one yourself! You'll give the whole show away with your silly nervousness. If this man gets suspicious of you you won't see Brooklyn for many moons. I believe Italian prisons are a shade worse than Gehenna."

"Nervous!" cried Aiken. "Of course, I'm nervous—but I can control myself and certainly don't propose to touch that devil's poison. Nervous! You'd be nervous, too, if you weren't rum-sodden. Why, if this man Stanford is ten minutes late, the whole thing will be up. He says eleven, and her train gets in at five past! And it's not ten minutes' drive from the station."

It was at this point that the girl pushed open the nearly closed door and confronted them. Spann, in the act of lifting a glass to his lips, bowed in her direction. "To your *beaux yeux!*" he cried gallantly.

She turned to Aiken. "I overheard what you said. Why should you fear Stanford's coming late—and who is the woman?"

"It's easily explained," returned the other wearily. "I've just had a telegram to say that the Countess insists on leaving Como, and will arrive here at eleven five, after expressly promising not to do so. After one of her attacks she is always cantankerous, and if she doesn't like the look of Stanford, or whoever has his power of attorney, she'll insult him and refuse to sign. If she does that where shall I be, or how will you get to Paris?"

Spann poured out another dram and raised his glass to the other man. "If I cannot love you," he said, "I can respect your abilities; and I straightway commission you to write me a romantic costume drama in four acts. *Prosit!*"

"It sounds plausible enough," commented Daphne, "but why should you fear Italian prisons?"

"Because, like yourself, I'm head over ears in debt, and you evidently don't know how they treat prisoners for debt in this country."

A certain sense of dread seized her. "It sounds too much like forgery," she muttered.

Aiken's quick ears overheard her. "Don't worry about that," he sneered. "You've already committed forgery when you signed at the bank." He looked at her angrily. "Does this mean that you are going to back out, after living at the Countess's expense here?"

"I suppose I must go through with it," she replied.

"That's right," he said, relieved. "And at half past ten, when this man has had a cold bath, he'll make your face up. You must look her age, you understand."

Spann, when the time came, appeared perfectly sober. The manner in which he could recover from an inordinate amount of drink amounted, he declared with some pride, to genius. Very skillfully he made her up to look the required age, no easy undertaking at short range in daylight. She had the

appearance of a woman who used rouge and powder to cover time's ravages, and the alteration in her style of hair dressing completed the change.

From behind closed doors she heard the arrival of the millionaire or his agent. She had noted the skill with which Spann had transformed himself into the dignified lawyer of stage tradition. A quiet suit of black clothes gave him a strictly professional air. For some time, it seemed, the three talked, and then the door was opened.

"Madame la Comtesse speaks no English," she heard Spann say. "We will carry on the conversation in French or Italian, as you please."

She could not hear the reply, but Spann looked in at her and bowed. "*Madame*," he said with an irreproachable accent, "*le monsieur américain est dehors. Il est temps que vous mettiez votre signature aux papiers.*"

She was wearing her richest costume, and swept regally into the room, a picture despite the age that Spann had given her. Then she stopped suddenly and stared at the stranger, her face growing white under its paint. Stanford's emissary was none other than the man whose image was in her heart, Norman Dunstan!

He took a step forward and looked eagerly into her face. "Am I dreaming?" he said. "Or aren't you someone else?"

Aiken stared from one to the other in consternation; something—he did not know what—had gone wrong.

"What do you mean?" he cried.

An expression of obstinacy came over Dunstan's face. "This lady," he said, "is not the Countess, and she does speak English."

"You are right," she said in a strained voice. "I am hired to impersonate her. Don't sign anything. Just look at their faces, and you'll see what I'm saying is true."

"I shall make it my business to find out," he said quickly. He turned to Spann, whose legal manner had dropped from him. "What does it mean?"

Spann pointed a soft white hand at

the girl. "To the victor the spoils," he cried. "We have lost." He had the assurance to smile blandly.

Aiken recovered himself less easily. "We must go," he said and tried to cross the room to the door beside which his confederate stood.

Spann waved him back imperiously. "Nay, nay," he exclaimed. "I have enough to get back to Broadway and Forty-second Street; we have not. Do you comprehend? *Addio*, my friends." He closed the door behind him. When Aiken essayed to follow, Dunstan interposed his big frame. "Not yet," he cried sternly. He addressed himself to the girl. "Perhaps you can explain."

Her heart sank at his stern manner. "I don't know anything," she faltered. "I only overheard them when they feared that the Countess would arrive. Her train is due now."

"Tell me this," he said to Aiken. "Two weeks ago my uncle sent me to Russia to inspect the property at Kars. The title was in order and the investment sound; why should you fear the owner's coming?"

"It's very plain," cried Daphne; "they have got hold of the documents and the information and expected to get your money. Were you to pay them anything?"

"I have a certified cheque in my pocket now," he returned.

"They are swindlers, then," she said wearily.

He stepped from the door and waved Aiken to it. "You'd better get out," he said. "If you are still here this evening I shall inform the authorities."

When they were alone he spoke to Daphne, still with a cold, impersonal manner. It seemed almost as though yesterday he were a boy and now had grown into a man.

"I don't suppose I did right," he said, "but I wanted to spare you all I could. You must have cares enough with the sort of life you lead already."

"Oh, but you mustn't associate me with them!" she cried. "I know it looks as though we were conspiring together—"

"And weren't you?" he snapped. "Weren't you all tricked up with paint and powder to defraud me and steal my uncle's money? Will you give me one good reason why I should not associate you with those two crooks?" He laughed a little bitterly. "I can assure you, if you did, it would save my self-respect."

She flushed. "I thought, at least, you would hear what I have to say."

"I won't!" he cried passionately. "I've no doubt you could do it; you're specious enough, but I've had my warning. There must be some women, I suppose, who earn their living by their wits, like you, and prey on credulous fools like me, but I'd rather think of you as that than have you canting and feigning repentance."

She held herself erect and looked him square in the face, but her lips were white and her voice was tremulous. A feeling of helplessness came upon her. She was, indeed, one of the conspirators. What excuse could she make that he could believe? And how, when her forgery was discovered, could she hope to make him take a lenient view of it? Her eyes fell before his. It was, he thought bitterly, the sure and certain sign of her guilt. She had gained a confidence which he had never given to anyone, and had betrayed him. This was the only girl who had made his heart beat faster. He had dreamed such dreams of what she might be in the future to him that the disappointment hurt him sorely. His anger was the righteous anger of an honorable man who feels he has been duped where never a trace of dishonor should abide. Rapidly there passed through his mind the incident of his first meeting and the confidences they had exchanged later. There was nothing, he was certain, which could give him a clue that she was not the sweet, true girl he had believed her. He had heard often how people could be used, all unconsciously, for the furtherance of dishonest schemes, and a softer look came to his face and a less stern mood.

The girl could read something of the struggle which was raging within him,

and timidly stepped nearer. From the shadow in which she had stood she advanced to him and stood in the strong morning light. He looked down at her suddenly and then started back. The lines, the clever lines which Spann had used to simulate a greater age, stood naked and hideous.

"No, no!" he cried. "Honest women don't paint themselves like that. You were one of them." He pointed to the door. "Hadn't you better join them, too?"

She shrank back into the shadow, and he laughed aloud.

"I owe you a great deal," he said. "When I met you I was not fond of society. I knew very few people, and except at an occasional dance or dinner rarely spoke to girls. But I cherished a hope—and you don't know how carefully I hugged it to myself lest anyone should find it out and pity me for it—that girls were good and beautiful and all that I believed my mother was. Some unhappy fate—I called it a beneficent Providence, like the fool I was—threw us together, and I said: 'Here is the girl of my dreams.'"

"Don't, don't!" she cried, covering her face with her hands and sinking into a chair.

"Yes, yes," he retorted, "let me lay myself bare so that we can both laugh. It will make my lesson all the more severe. You don't know how wretched I felt at the Cathedral when I feared you weren't coming. When I saw you I could have sung for joy. In the afternoon I knew it was love that you had waked in me. We were to have met in a few hours' time. I should have asked you to marry me. It would have been such an easy triumph for you that I suppose you would hardly have kept it in mind very long."

"You are very cruel," she sobbed.

"Who was the more cruel?" he demanded. "You found out I was lonelier than most men, and so you were lonely, too. Two lonely people with the same tastes, who were to meet in Paris and walk through the chestnut forests of Marly together!"

She looked at him coldly. "Did I suggest that, or did you?"

"I did—I did," he answered. "You were too clever. You suggested nothing. You made me do it. I was clay in your hands—hands that have molded many before me."

She stood up, her self-possession recovered, and with her handkerchief wiped some traces of Spann's work away.

"If it ever becomes possible for me to explain my connection in this matter," she said, "I shall never do it. I cared—a little while ago I cared very much—for your good opinion of me, but now that has passed. You are a man and men are supposed to be fairer than we women; yet you judge me unheard. You insult me bitterly when you hint that I laid traps for you. When I said I was lonely I spoke only the truth; it was for that reason it was pleasant to meet a fellow countryman."

"What about your other two?" he cried grimly. "I'm ashamed to remember that they were fellow countrymen, too. These excuses won't do."

Her eyes flashed haughtily at him. "Please don't for a moment think I want to make any excuses to you. What you believe isn't of any consequence to me now."

"I see!" he sneered. "The haughty, fiery Southern blood is roused at the notion! An Elton! I wonder what made you assume a name like that? The last of the Eltons! How you must have chuckled when I credited you with the Elton of Seven Rivers fame as a grandfather!" He sighed. A feeling of weariness had succeeded his fit of anger. He looked at the girl and grew kinder toward her. "I suppose I don't know what temptations have beset you," he said slowly. "Men never know these things."

"Spare me your pity," she cried angrily.

"I may even, later on in life, bless you for this lesson. We won't talk about it any more. The point is, what am I to do about these papers? My uncle's instructions, which I received

by cable last night, were to close the deal instantly."

There was a stamping of hoofs and the sound of wheels outside. "I think this may be the Countess. You can discuss my fate with her. I shall not run away."

He looked at her in some consternation. It was all well enough that he should be angry, but he could not bear to think with equanimity that other people might possess the same right.

"You've done nothing legally wrong," he said eagerly. "I want to buy and she wants to sell, and I have my certified cheque still in my pocket. Everything has gone well so far."

"Except," she returned without emotion, "that I have forged her signature to a draft. Except for that, all promises well."

He was ashamed of his anger, and thought only of what could be done to save her from the probable consequences of her assumption of the Countess's character.

"Leave it to me," he cried quickly. "I shall be entitled to some consideration in view of my uncle's purchase."

"I'd rather leave it to anyone else," she said scornfully. His lack of faith, the bitter things he had flung at her, were burned into her very heart. "Why should you be expected to side with an adventuress? Haven't you learned your lesson yet?"

There was the sound of excited conversation in the passage outside the door, and the hotel manager, very apologetic to the veritable Countess and beside himself with anger at the pretended Madame de Kars, entered, with a number of people. "There she is!" cried the manager. "I shall send for the police."

"Not until I give you permission," said the Countess. "Let no rumor of this leak out, or I shall instantly leave the hotel for another. You may go."

He bowed himself out, and the aristocrat, without taking any heed of the two Americans, ordered her maid and courier to dispose of her baggage. There was an old man whom

she treated with more consideration. "Monsieur," she said to him, "will you wait in the adjoining room until I need you? And may I intrust this lady to your care?" She looked coldly at Daphne. "You will be wise," she said, "if you give me your word not to try to escape. This gentleman is my lawyer."

When the two had gone from the room she turned to Norman Dunstan.

"And now, perhaps, after this excitement, you will be good enough to tell me who you are." Her English was perfect and the accent hardly noticeable.

"My name," he returned stiffly, "is Dunstan. I am Justin Stanford's nephew, and have his power of attorney to conclude the negotiation"—he paused significantly—"if I see fit."

"Which means—" she queried.

He answered her question by another. "Do you know anything of the two men who have been pretending to act for you?"

"Everything," she answered. "They are at present in the custody of the police. Aiken is charged with having embezzled some money with the aid of the woman."

"What will you do?" he demanded.

"I am not the law," she retorted.

"What will happen to the girl then?"

The Countess shrugged her shoulders. "What does happen to that kind of person?" she asked. "So many months or years in prison, I imagine." She looked at him a little suspiciously. "Of what interest can this be to you? And how am I to know that you are indeed who you represent yourself to be?"

"That is not difficult," he said. "Ask your lawyer in the next room if he has ever seen me."

She called out in an imperious voice: "Venez, Monsieur Labidoff." The Russian lawyer entered. She pointed to Dunstan. "Do you know this gentleman?" she exclaimed.

"Perfectly, madame," returned the other. "He it was who inspected your property for his uncle."

"That will do," she cried. "I beg

your pardon," she said to the American. "After so much treachery one becomes filled with doubt."

"Don't mention it," he said. "As it happens, I'm glad. Monsieur Labidoff, who speaks very fair English, confided to me that you were particularly anxious to sell the Kars property, and I heard, when at Monte Carlo last week, that your losses had been enormous—so much so that your famous rubies were given as security to some Parisian bankers."

"This is unwarrantable!" she cried hotly. "Labidoff will be sorry for what he said."

"That's not my affair," he replied imperturbably. "I am here to buy your property, and to pay for it if I approve. At present, madame, I do not approve."

"But surely," she returned a trifle anxiously—for she was desperately in need of the money—"we have met every condition?"

"It's something which has arisen within the last hour," he said. "I will buy your property if you will allow the lady in the room there to go free. I give you my word that she is merely the tool"—it was a brave lie and well carried off—"of those two men. The sum she allowed Aiken to take was probably small. I will settle it willingly."

He noticed that the Countess had thin lips and they were drawn together ominously. "I fear," she answered after a pause, "that the matter is not any longer in my hands. If it were, I should be disposed to help you."

"I'm sorry," he said. "You'll permit me to bid you good day."

She stamped her foot pettishly. "No, no!" she cried. "If you will, I must arrange it so."

"I am very much obliged to you," he said gravely. "If you will call in your attorney we can get to business right away."

It took some time for him to look through the papers, but they were perfectly *en règle*. With the hotel manager as a witness they were signed. Labidoff received the certified cheque with

eagerness. He knew better than his employer what the loss of it would mean. The Countess looked at him with frank curiosity. "How do you know I shall fulfill my part of the contract?"

"Because you are yourself," he told her. He had no clear idea of what he meant, but it pleased her.

"I shall tell my understudy," she returned, "that chivalry still lives."

"I beg you won't," he said in distress. "I should have made it clear that my name is not to come into this, at all. I shall never see her again. I am only sorry that she should have been drawn innocently into such company."

"It shall be as you wish, Mr. Dunstan," she rejoined, giving him her hand. "Good-bye."

V

It was Daphne's day of humiliation. The Russian lawyer told her that Madame la Comtesse would speak to her. As though she were a criminal, she was conducted to the next room to submit to her cross-examination. She was thankful that Labidoff was not present. The Russian woman gazed at her with interest. A cosmopolite, used to the society of many capitals, she was a trained observer of character; and this pale young American girl was not of the class she expected to find linked with Aiken and Spann. There was neither impudent defiance nor assumed penitence on her face. There was to be seen, instead, a look of nervous tension which betrayed the emotion within.

Daphne was, in truth, face to face with a situation so hopeless that she already saw prison doors shutting on her and an end to all her hopes. The Countess had, she decided, a face not easily moved to compassion, even were she to essay to awaken sympathy. She supposed dully that there would be a police investigation, a conviction, and a punishment. That her wrongdoing was forced upon her in a specious light

would have little influence with her judges. It was, indeed, as she had to admit to her inner consciousness, a very flimsy story, one which could be torn to ribbons and ridiculed by any counsel of ordinary intelligence.

"I have learned from the man Aiken," commenced the elder woman, "that you have forged my name to a letter of credit for a thousand lire."

"It is true," said the other.

"He explained why you occupied these rooms, but he did not tell me whether you had been his accomplice long. Whether you have or not does not particularly concern me at the present moment—"

"Won't you hear me?" cried the girl. "Will no one listen to me?"

"Hear you?" the other repeated.

"Listen to you? Why should I?"

"Have you no sense of justice?"

The Countess laughed. "Justice! I see what you mean. I shall not hear you because I have other things to do, but you are free to go. In fact, you had better go at once. I shall take no steps against you."

"How generous of you!" said Daphne, when she understood what this meant to her. "It is splendidly generous of you." Her eyes filled with tears. "You are the only one who believes in me."

Her listener laughed rather cruelly.

"But I don't believe in you. *Au contraire*, I believe you to be a remarkably clever young woman who succeeds by her appearance of *bon ton* and youth."

"Then, why do you let me go?"

"Because I do not want a scandal. I shall not proceed against either of your friends. As it happens, they have done me no particular harm. I never had a greater stroke of luck than selling my Kars property. Believe if you like that I give you freedom because I admire your audacity."

"I won't accept it, then!" stormed Daphne hysterically. "I am not a criminal, nor a friend of criminals. What I did I did because I thought I was helping you."

"That is too funny!" laughed the other. "You to help me!"

"You dare not let me explain!"

"Dare not?" rejoined the other angrily. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," said the girl, "that if I told you my story and you chose to corroborate it, as you could easily do, you would have to ask my pardon and admit that I come of as good a family as yours."

"Very well," said the other after a pause; "I accept, but I tell you that, scandal or no scandal, if you have lied you shall be punished for it." She was not a woman who brooked opposition.

Daphne told her fully what had happened to her since she had left New York. The other listened without comment until it was finished.

"I shall send Monsieur Labidoff to telegraph to the Abetone police and otherwise verify your story. It may be if you are right I shall not feel humiliated in asking your pardon. Or it may be I shall feel a greater admiration for you than ever, but in a different way. Will you give me your *parole d'honneur* to remain in this hotel until I am satisfied?"

"I will," said the girl.

She went to her room and waited for the summons. The relief she already felt was inexpressible. Although a vindication reduced her once more to the dire situation of complete penury, she would be, at least, cleared. She was not of the material for crime since the thought of complicity had terrified her. She made a hundred resolutions to amend the ways which, after all, had little save carelessness in money matters that could be charged against her. At a quarter before eight there was a knock at her door and the Countess's maid entered and bowed respectfully. "*Madame la Comtesse*," she said, "asks mademoiselle to do her the honor of dining with her at eight."

Beside the Countess and Monsieur Labidoff there were three other guests, a member of the Lombard nobility and his wife, and a monsignor of the Roman Catholic Church. Daphne paused al-

most irresolute in the doorway. The Countess advanced and kissed her on both cheeks. It was as though she greeted an intimate friend. She introduced her as a member of an illustrious family of Virginia about to proceed to Paris to study singing under the *maestro* Bonmarais.

The atmosphere of the little party was pleasantly familiar, and when they had gone the Countess patted the girl affectionately on the hand. "My dear," she said, "you are the first woman whose pardon I have asked. I shall not see you again in Milan. Perhaps in Paris later, at the Opera, who knows? Labidoff will see that you catch the Paris express at ten tomorrow morning; I shall not be up. What? You don't welcome the prospect?"

Paris, thought Daphne bitterly—how could she get to Paris with three lire in her pocket? And what, if she reached her Mecca, could she do without means?

"I don't think I shall go there yet," she faltered.

"Where, then?" asked the other.

"I must see our consul first," returned the girl. She could dimly realize the difficulties that beset her path, now that she was free from the greater evil.

"Before I go," said the Countess, ignoring her remark, "I must return to you the money that you lost. The excellent Labidoff is no believer in travelers' cheques. He has changed them to notes." She thrust into the girl's hands a bundle of French and Italian notes to the value of two thousand five hundred francs.

Daphne looked at the elder woman gratefully. "I am not so deceived," she cried. "But oh, how kind you are!"

"No, no!" exclaimed the Countess. "I lend it to you because I know with your voice you will repay when the time comes. I am no longer in debt; it is an investment I make with every confidence." Her face softened when she saw how much Daphne was affected. "I wish I could have kept you with me," she said, "but no woman

can ever tolerate the presence of another who looks as she did fifteen years ago. You would be the ghost of what I was."

VI

DAPHNE's father, the only son of General Elton, had died when his daughter was less than a year old. He had been of just such an age when his father fell at Seven Rivers. His early life had been spent in Virginia with his mother. When she died in his early manhood he had realized on his property, sold most of it to his Aunt Sophia and set out for Paris, with the vague dreams of a young man who fancied that in art and literature he would find his vocation.

He had been some five years in Paris, steadily acquiring sufficient literary knowledge of it to enable him to write well in French, when he met a certain *Mademoiselle de Jourdain*, at that time rising into public favor as a singer. It was said that she came of an old family in Normandy, which had disowned her for seeking to earn her livelihood. It is certain she never spoke of her relatives, and it would seem equally certain that her mode of life was irreproachable. There is no doubt that she might have made a brilliant marriage had she not met Elton. True to the family type, he was a tall, blue-eyed man, who carried himself with a natural distinction. She was *petite*, vivacious and in love with him for his enthusiasm as well as his looks. He insisted that she must abandon her profession when she became his wife. To this great sacrifice she had consented. From the journals of the period one may see what regret this act caused generally.

She had saved money, and they took a house in the Rue St. Hyacinthe and spent two happy years. During the last year her husband's health had begun to fail. Like most men who live on their capital in the hope of making money enough to repay it, he had many anxious moments, many sad hours of accounting. When he re-

proached himself for his selfishness in taking her from a profession where she might have attained fortune and fame, and confessed that his money was almost gone, there was never a word of anything but comfort from the woman he had married. It was, perhaps, owing to the devoted affection they bore one another that she did not long survive his death; and it was owing to this, too, that their child inherited a certain sweetness of disposition and sympathy which sustained her in the early, joyless years.

There was, thus, in her very blood, calling her to strive for fame, something of her mother's spirit, which showed her Paris not as a grim city set with difficulties but a home wherein to win happiness. She breathed in Paris a familiar air, and felt, all unconscious of the reason, that it promised her a career.

The days she had passed in Milan in company with the only man who had ever awakened in her a deep interest now seemed to her an episode in a vanished incarnation. And yet she knew, when she forced herself to think of it, that even as wind can fan a tiny, slumbering spark to a fire, so occasion could turn what she admitted to be a deep interest into something infinitely stronger.

She formulated a little conduct of life in which not love but work was consecrated. It was not a joyous creed, but, as her mother had said, she inherited a great capacity for suffering. And if her Milanese experience of men and crime had exercised an educational effect upon her, they had also robbed her of the pleasure of belief in her fellows.

"I shall never," she often said to herself, "be the same again." Sometimes she thought she was glad of it, but more often the knowledge gave her pain. Brought up as she had been, cloistered from the world, two and twenty is not so great an age in which to see life and see it whole.

The students' reception at the house of Hippolyte Bonmarais brought her into close touch with her fellow pupils. Some of them were inclined to be ami-

able and make much of her. But hospitality she knew must be returned, and her spirit of economy eventually triumphed over the lavish Elton desire to spend, and she was presently left alone.

Bonmarais was a plain but jovial man, who liked his work but neglected the pupils who had no careers possible for those who might add to his fame as a teacher. Concerning Daphne's voice he was noncommittal. "Sometimes," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, "*le bon Dieu* rewards those who work; sometimes he forgets."

She got scant comfort from this. There were times when she despaired absolutely of progress. The girl who had a lesson immediately before hers—to the tail end of which she often listened—was a Bostonian, with a great, round voice easily produced. She advised Daphne good-naturedly to leave Bonmarais for Marchesi. "Bonmarais suits me," she said, "but for you old Madame would be the thing. She talks a lot in her lesson, and she'll make you pay for listening to the trouble she has with servants, and how much Blanche makes now, and how when she was young she had no voice at all—but when she does tell you anything it's genius."

Daphne felt that she could not leave Bonmarais. At the instance of Hilary Lowndes he had reduced his terms and consented to take her as a pupil. And she supposed that Marchesi's terms would be higher still. She had not yet—and this was after three months at her master's—been able to get him to send in his bill. "All in good time, little one," he would say paternally. "I am so occupied."

Once when she had praised the singing of the other American girl he laughed her to scorn. "Praise her voice if you like," he cried, "but not her singing. If you had her voice, her natural voice, and your own style and intelligence, you could be a singer to make me more famous than I am. She sings like a cow. She will do for some big church in your country where they all sing alike."

The life of the student of singing is rarely one of progressive certainty as is the career of students of other arts. Essentially a temperamental singer, the bitter east winds that visited Paris in her year, and the many fogs that enwrapped it depressed Daphne exceedingly. For two weeks she had such a cold that she was not allowed to sing at all. And all the while her money was steadily expended and no safe harbor in sight. The natural flight of woman to milk and crackers or tea and bread and butter when food is high would, she knew, have only a bad effect upon her. She must conserve her strength and her voice with it.

One dreary Sunday after Christmas she determined to expend two francs on the cheapest seat at the *Lamoureux* Concert at the *Salle Gaveau*, with *Chevillard* conducting. The hall was warm, her neighbors students like herself, and she settled down to an afternoon of keen enjoyment. In front of her, far away and below her perch, she had a vision of well dressed men and gorgeously gowned women who occupied the ten-franc seats. She had no glasses with her, and paid little attention to them, except to mutter her annoyance when three came in late during the first movement of the *Manfred* symphony of *Tschaikowsky*. These were two men and a woman. The elder man was *Justin Stanford*; the girl was *Helen Beckford*, well known in New York, London and Paris; and the third was *Norman Dunstan*, the old man's nephew and *Miss Beckford's* fiancé.

When *Dunstan's* judgment of the worth of the *Kars* property had been justified by the great profit on its sale to a syndicate of Chicago capitalists, his uncle informed him that he might consider himself a junior partner in the firm, with a salary greatly in excess of anything he had dreamed.

"Until I sent you out to prove yourself," the old man often said, "you were a feather-brained boy, who looked at the paper to see the result of football matches and ball games. Now you're a man after my own heart."

Dunstan never told him that his alteration was from other causes. But the alteration was no less marked than *Justin Stanford* had said. Nothing in his life had so eaten its way into the younger man's soul than his *Milan* disappointment. Sometimes he reproached himself for having been hard and unbelieving, and at others pretended to thank his fate that he had not fallen victim to a beautiful adventuress.

The concert seemed to him tedious. His fiancée was really fond of music, and looked to him now and then with reproof in her eyes at his lack of enthusiasm. In a way, he supposed, he was fond of *Helen Beckford*. His uncle had practically arranged the details; and at a dance in a brilliantly lighted room he had made the very conventional proposal which she had been warned to expect. He had read in the papers that it was a romantic and charming engagement. He had not previously been aware of it.

He was heartily glad when the music ceased and he was in his uncle's motor car on his way to the house in the *Parc Monceau*. *Miss Beckford*, in her mother's carriage, went to her home in the *Boulevard Haussmann*. Idly looking from the window as the car swung out of the *Rue de la Boétie* into the *Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, he saw *Daphne* on foot and alone. There could be no possibility of mistaking her erect carriage and graceful figure. In the glimpse he had of her he could see that she was quietly dressed and thinner and paler than he had known her in the summer. Before he could communicate with the chauffeur and bring the car to a standstill they were many hundred yards past where he had seen her. Making a hasty excuse to *Mr. Stanford*, he dived into the crowds on an errand which he felt was well-nigh hopeless. She had disappeared. After a search of ten minutes he knew he would be unable to find her. It was already almost dark.

Banishing all pretense, he acknowledged that he loved *Daphne* and must find her. In the excitement of such a possibility he forgot about *Miss Beck-*

ford. And high above everything was the hope that she might be able to tell him that his suspicions of her were wrong, and that, despite appearances, she was innocent and, as she had claimed, a student of singing and not an adventuress. He had borne in mind the name of Bonmarais, and was soon driving thither. His heart was like a singing bird at the thought.

Bonmarais received him graciously. He had the appearance of affluence which the Frenchman loved. All Paris knew Bonmarais as one anxious to be on intimate terms with the rich.

"You may remember," Dunstan began, "that some months ago—to be precise, in October—I wrote to you from London asking for the address of a Miss Elton, who was to become your pupil."

"I remember perfectly," returned Bonmarais, looking at him curiously. "It was my regret to tell you that I had no such pupil." He remembered the incident well. He had instantly sent the communication on to Hilary Lowndes.

"Today," continued the American, "I thought I saw the lady. Will you give me her address now?"

Bonmarais made a gesture expressive of the keenest regret. "If such a lady were with me, how gladly would I help you!" he said. "The name is unknown to me." He had a certain sympathy with this big, self-contained visitor; but he also admitted that he was a *beau garçon*, and his patron, Hilary Lowndes, would most certainly disapprove of granting the favor.

Norman Dunstan took his leave with apologies for interrupting the other, but unconvinced of his honesty. He had noticed the barely perceptible pause between his question and the answer of Bonmarais. A truthful man, he argued, would have had no need to wait; he would instantly have declared the name unfamiliar.

Daphne's weekly lessons took place at three on the afternoons of Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. Dunstan kept an eye on the house without reward for the whole of Monday. Since he

was to attend a big reception with his fiancée, this course subjected him to adverse criticism. And when on Tuesday morning he refused to satisfy his uncle as to his destination, and postponed an expedition to the Louvre with Miss Beckford, her suspicious nature was aroused. There was a maid in whom she had implicit belief. After luncheon on Tuesday this woman followed Dunstan and returned at half past four to report to her mistress.

When Daphne, coming down the seven stone steps that led to the Bonmarais house, saw Dunstan waiting but a few yards away, there was little of the scornful anger which she had often rehearsed in contemplating such a meeting. For she had often dreamed that some time she might see him, in the days when she would have won fame by her voice. She was almost ashamed of the rush of gladness which swept over her at sight of the man who had humiliated her beyond endurance and had judged her so hardly when her innocence might easily have been proven. But there was no trace of cordiality in her greeting. Dunstan had not, indeed, looked for it, but he was assured that the task before him was a heavy one.

He raised his hat. "May I have five minutes of your time?" he asked.

"I don't think it can be necessary," she replied.

He fell into step with her and walked a few moments in silence. "It is," he said, "for me, if not for you. You must know that I want to apologize for the mad things I said that day in Milan."

"There is no need," she said. "What you said you felt justified in saying. I was for the time, as you pointed out, an accomplice of criminals. For all you know, I may still be working with them."

"I found out all about you," he returned simply. "I knew, before the Countess came into the room, that there was some mystery which could be cleared. I cleared it, and have been ashamed of myself ever since."

"How could you clear it?" she asked.

"I found Spann, and"—his teeth set grimly—"I told him I would beat the life out of him if he didn't tell me everything he knew. He professed to be anxious to tell. They had heard of your money being stolen. Aiken, it appears, was in the consulate when you came in, and overheard everything. They just used you as a tool."

"Did you find out anything about Spann and Aiken?" she demanded. "I could never understand how they were able to get the documents and play the part."

"Aiken was a shady company promoter in New York, and heard of the Countess's land as a likely speculation. He scraped what money he could together and went to see her. He offered to form a syndicate for her which would bring enormous revenues. She liked the idea, but Labidoff—you remember the Russian lawyer—was too conservative. He cabled to the Russian consulate in New York for Aiken's record. When he received it Aiken was given marching orders. He was chatting with Spann, whom he had just met after losing sight of him for two or three years, at the Gare du Nord here when he saw the Countess, her maid and secretary and old Labidoff going into the refreshment room. They were on their way to Monte Carlo or somewhere. Aiken thought very possibly that Labidoff's black satchel, in which important papers were carried, might be with them. Spann agreed to the scheme, and cleverly annexed the thing. The next day, disguised as an old French *curé* from the provinces, he returned it intact and received a reward of five hundred francs."

"What good did it do them?" Daphne asked.

"Spann spent the night in copying the legal papers and making notes of Labidoff's letters to my uncle. They knew, consequently, all about it, and were able to deceive me absolutely."

"How long after I had left Milan did you learn this?"

"The next day," he returned. "For some reason or other, the Countess

would not proceed against either of the men."

"If you have known that I was not what you called me for all these months, I wonder that you trouble to make any excuses now."

"I tried!" he exclaimed eagerly. "I tried in every way I could. I wrote to Bonmarais in October, when I thought you would be here, and he replied that he had no such pupil."

"It seems almost incredible," she said.

"And more than that," he returned, "I called on him on Sunday—I passed you coming from a Lamoureux concert—and he declared he didn't know you."

"I can hardly credit it!" she said. "What interest could he have?"

"It's mysterious," he agreed. "But what does it matter, now I have found you?" Her heart beat the faster at this, but he could still gather nothing from her face or manner. "You've got very thin," he said abruptly.

"I've had a bad cold," she returned.

"Very, very thin," he persisted, "and your color is gone. You work too hard." He thought bitterly of Helen Beckford's wealth, of her dresses, her jewels and her life of ease, of the whims her wealth could instantly satisfy.

Since he had last seen Daphne in Milan there had come to him a certain seriousness in his outlook on life which was rather the result of a more perfect comprehension of it than anything else. Unused as men are to gather from a woman's dress, as their sisters may, some fair reflection of the wearer's pocket, he could see that she was plainly gowned. He had been told by his fiancée tolerantly that plainness was no certain indication of little cost; but her black coat was almost shabby; her gloves had been cleaned more than once; and there was a neat patch on her small shoe. The fur boa and muff in the animal kingdom had never been other than plain rabbit. As the wind blew round the corners he saw that the under part was worn. Helen's father at Christmas had given her a sable coat and muff worth five thousand dollars.

Five thousand dollars for a coat, to add to an already large collection of furs, while the last of the Eltons, this brave, pathetic figure, shivered at the east winds of Paris in her wretched black cloth coat.

"I like my work," she said.

"And you are getting on well?" he demanded.

"I hope so," she returned with a smile.

His new sympathy told him she was bravely trying to persuade himself as well as her own heart that she was. Something told him that she was making a desperate fight where only defeat could result. He did not know what course to take. He was not certain how she regarded his intrusion; he felt that he could never earn complete forgiveness; and he experienced a sense of misery beyond anything that he had ever known.

"Poor, brave little girl!" he thought. "What can I do for her?"

"What luck have you had?" she asked. "You dreamed of building bridges."

"I've given that up," he returned. "My uncle has taken me into a sort of informal partnership. From a worldly point of view, I have nothing to complain of."

"I'm glad," she said gently.

"You oughtn't to be!" he cried almost fiercely. "You ought to have wished me every sort of bad luck conceivable. God knows I deserved it! Ought I, after that day in Milan, to have had any more luck?"

"Please forget that," she said. "If I've forgotten it, why can't you?"

"Have you *forgiven* it?" he asked, stopping suddenly and looking into her face.

She laughed to hide her nervousness.

"Of course, I have," she replied.

"And we are friends again?" he demanded.

"There's my hand on it," she said.

"I can never forgive myself, though," he cried a minute later. "I was dishonorable, petty, mean, spiteful. I am quite sure if you had ever believed in anyone, no matter what he had done,

you'd stick to him till he confessed. That's the loyalty I have always liked, and yet failed in when put to the test."

"Mr. Dunstan," she said firmly, "I hate to be made miserable, because it makes me sing badly. Here's a *voiture* coming; if you don't promise to be cheerful I shall jump into it and go home. And it's an extravagance I don't want to commit. There are so many things you can talk about in Milan besides that wretched day which we've both sworn to forget. Don't you remember the top of the Cathedral, and your learned disquisitions on the saints and Borromeo's spire? Is it to be the *voiture* or cheerfulness?"

He laughed, better spirits returning at her manner. "Vivacity, not *voiture*," he cried. "I ought not to have inflicted my penance on you. Let's follow a Milanese custom and have tea. We aren't far from the tea place in the Place Vendome." He raised a hand and beckoned to the white-hatted driver.

"It's my *voiture*, after all," she said gaily.

At the tea shop they chatted over the incidents at Milan, but never approached, verbally at least, the old familiar footing. There was a certain reserve born of their very happiness. But their hearts were full and their eyes spoke more eloquently than their lips.

She looked out into the darkening night. "I must go," she said. "I have a long way to walk."

"I'm going to see you home," he said masterfully; then, more timidly, "May I?"

"You may," she said happily. "But I live in a very unfashionable neighborhood."

It was a poor house in a mean street, but she had decided that her *pension*, with its inevitable extras, was running away too quickly with her little fortune, and had taken lodgings with a French family. She had little to do with her landlords. She saw little of them and liked them less, but it was cheap and clean.

Norman Dunstan thought of the Stanford house in the Parc Monceau and the great Beckford mansion in the Boulevard Haussmann, and his thoughts were bitter. He was stirred with a dull, slumbering sort of anger at the girl whose fiancé he was. But for her he would have taken poor, frail little Daphne in his arms and kissed some color into the pale cheeks. "Tomorrow," he muttered, keeping himself in check, "tomorrow."

"What are you muttering about?" she demanded.

"I said 'tomorrow,'" he returned softly. "Tomorrow you'll know. Have you a lesson on Wednesday?"

She shook her head. "Not till Thursday."

"I'm coming for you tomorrow at three," he said. "We'll go for a drive in the Bois and then seek out another tea place. I think the Palais de Glace will do. We can watch the people skating."

"My work—" she said dubiously.

"It can spare me a happy hour, I'm sure. If you don't come I shall take it as a sign that you're of an un-forgiving nature."

"I always had a little suspicion of your truthfulness," she retorted. "Well, just for once I'll break my rules. Good-bye."

"*Au revoir*," he said.

His mood at dinner, at once an admixture of an unusual gaiety and of unusual silences, caused his very watchful uncle some alarm. "Don't you notice," said Mr. Stanford, "that Helen and her mother are not dining here?"

"I hadn't remembered they were coming," he answered. "What has happened?"

"Mrs. Beckford has a headache, and Helen is staying with her, like a dutiful daughter."

"She doesn't usually," said Dunstan.

The old man gave his customary grunt and left the Beckfords for the subject of a South American railroad which he was thinking of purchasing. His nephew welcomed the change.

VII

Mrs. BECKFORD, absolutely under the control of her daughter and always in the grip of some trifling ailment, accepted Helen's dictum that she was not well enough to dine out, and heard the message 'phoned to Mr. Stanford. Then she was piloted to bed, where a maid massaged her empty head. Helen, when she had finished dinner, ordered the limousine car, and accompanied by her trustworthy maid, sped to the house in which Daphne lodged. The woman of the house, impressed deeply by the splendid sable coat and the great automobile outside, gave eagerly what she knew of her lodger's life. She told with some scorn how poor she was, what she ate and how she essayed to do most of her washing in her tiny room. She declared that mademoiselle had no visitors. Not until tonight, when she was accompanied to the front door by a tall man, *très distingué*, had she ever seen her in company with a soul.

"I wish to see her," said Miss Beckford imperiously. "Do not announce me; show me to her room."

Daphne was sitting before the cheerless little slow combustion stove when Miss Beckford knocked. Thinking it was Madame Dubont, who sometimes came in to grumble, she called out, "*Entrez*."

Miss Beckford swept into the little room with a grand air. Madame Dubont, in the hope of gleaning some information, went down on her knees by the stove and seemed to find necessity for a lengthy investigation of it. But Miss Beckford's cold gray eye disturbed her, and she went mumbling from the room.

"My name is Beckford," Daphne's visitor commenced.

"Please sit down," said the girl, rising.

"Thank you, no," returned the other. "I prefer to stand."

There was some warning of menace in her voice, and she stared with fixedness at the girl in black. But stare as haughtily as she might, she was met

with as bold a front as her own. She looked round the poor room at the shabby rug, the oleographs on the wall, the dull stove and the thousand things which spoke of poverty.

"My poor child," she said at length, "believe me, I come as your friend."

"You are very kind," Daphne returned.

"I first thought of writing, but there is too much to be explained."

Her manner had that air of patronage which aroused instant antagonism in the other. Daphne stifled a yawn. "I'm rather tired," she said. "If you wouldn't mind coming to the point at once, I should be so glad."

Miss Beckford's lips took on a scornful curl. "I certainly will," she snapped. "This afternoon you met Mr. Norman Dunstan and went to a teashop in the Place Vendome with him. You also"—and this was a bow drawn at a venture—"you also made an appointment with him for tomorrow."

"You are well informed," said Daphne, with no appearance of embarrassment. "What of it?"

"It is wiser not to meet him."

"And is this what you came to say?"

Helen Beckford grew restive under the calm, level stare of the dark-eyed girl. "My poor child," she said with affected pity, "I came as your friend. If you care anything at all for his future you will let him alone."

"Why? And what do you know of his future?"

"He is without a profession. True, he dabbled with engineering, but has no sort of practical experience. He could not earn his living at it. His uncle, if he learned of his affair with you, would promptly disinherit him. If he did you would have only yourself to blame. You used to know him well, I believe?"

Daphne made no answer, and the elder girl continued: "If you knew him, and liked him, and like him still, you have the power, by refusing to see him any more, of helping him. Do you love him?"

Did she love him? The poor starved

heart of the Southern girl swelled with a very tender pride at the thought. She lived for the morrow and his coming. The hard look faded from her face. There was a pride in her love which robbed her of any shame in its confession. "I love him," she answered.

"I swear to you," cried the other, "that what I have said is true! If you love him you will give him up."

"When he tells me he wants me to give him up, I will," returned Daphne.

Helen could have struck her across the face; but she held herself in hand and spoke very quietly. "If your love is real," she said, "you will prove it by renouncing him."

"You don't know him," returned Daphne slowly. "I could do no more cruel thing than give him up. Why should my heart break and his life be spoiled just for the sake of his uncle's money?" She looked at the richly dressed woman curiously. "Why do you concern yourself with me? What business is it of yours?"

Helen Beckford had feared that her humiliation must come, and had been prepared. "Because," she said between her teeth, "I am engaged to him."

Daphne laughed pityingly. "You mean you want to be."

"You don't believe me, then?"

Daphne shook her head. "Not a word," she returned.

From a pocket Miss Beckford took an envelope filled with clippings from a New York newspaper clipping bureau. "Read these," she said. "And if you don't believe them, ask him tomorrow."

Pitilessly the girl read them one by one. In every big paper in the country some mention had been made of it. Details were not wanting as to the success Norman Dunstan had made of the purchase of the Kars property. The New York dailies published photographs of the bride-elect. There was no room to doubt. There was only plainly to be read a man's treachery.

"I believe you," she said wearily. "I will give him up. Please go now."

It is to the other woman's credit

that she went straightway, and even glanced with a look that had something of pity in it at the girl leaning on the table, her face buried in her hands.

Helen Beckford had not been at home more than ten minutes when Norman Dunstan was announced. It was at first her intention to refuse to see him; but if explanations were to be, she believed in facing them at once.

"Is Mrs. Beckford better?" he asked.

"Poor dear," said her daughter sympathetically, "her headache was frightful. She always gets like this when she does a picture gallery. She went to the collection of the new Spanish school this morning. It's very sweet of you to come, though."

"I'm not sure that it is," he replied with a suspicion of uneasiness. "The fact is, Helen, it's particularly unpleasant."

"Leave it till tomorrow," she suggested lazily.

"No, no!" he cried. "Helen," he began desperately, "haven't you sometimes thought we—you and I have made a mistake?"

"A mistake!" she repeated. "In what?"

"In getting engaged," he exclaimed. "It's very hard to tell you this, and I must bear the blame, but I have discovered that I"—he blundered on nervously—"that I don't love you enough."

"My poor boy!" she laughed. "How sweetly romantic of you! Who would have suspected you of it? No one ever loves one's fiancée enough."

She had known what was coming well enough, but she had mapped out her campaign. Tonight he was full of the image of the dark-haired singer. Tomorrow he would come back to her. She determined to take nothing that he said seriously.

"I'm afraid I don't love you well enough to marry," he said.

"That isn't gallant," she laughed. "But you're in one of your silly, your peculiarly silly moods."

"Silly!" he cried. "Good God, Helen, it's one of the few times in my life that I have been serious!"

"Which proves my words to be true," she retorted.

"This is preposterous!" he cried, getting angry. "I tried to tell you in a way that would wound you as little as possible, and you laugh at me. I repeat that we are not in any way suited to one another. It was an arranged match—your mother and my uncle—we had danced together a few times—"

"And I," she continued, "had informed the world that your declarations at bridge sometimes amounted to genius. What more was necessary?"

"Helen," he said sternly, "I came here tonight because it was my duty. I try to make this unpleasant scene as short as possible, and you refuse to accept my word." He rose from his seat. "I am going to tell my uncle that we are no longer engaged."

"Poor Norman!" she said softly. "So he goes to building bridges, after all! One begins by being a sandhog afflicted with 'bends,' I believe, doesn't one?"

"I can work," he snapped back in answer. "Thank heaven, I'm strong!"

"I think your ill temper has given me a headache," she said plaintively.

"I'm sorry," he responded more gently. "On my soul, Helen, I'm sorry. But which is worse—to get it over now, or to hate one another when it is too late? People will say I have behaved badly. I shall merit some of their blame, but some day you'll tell me I was right. Is there any need that we should be enemies?"

"My dear boy," she returned, "if you think I'm going to take you seriously, you are much in error."

He looked at her a moment in amazement and shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know why you affect to misunderstand me," he said quietly. "I tell you finally that I break our engagement. This much I shall tell my uncle. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," she called out, smiling.

"I shall expect you to tea tomorrow at half past four. The little hot cakes in which your soul delights shall be waiting for you."

When he had gone the placid look vanished from her face. She sat motionless before the fire until very late.

On reaching the house in the Parc Monceau Norman went to his uncle's room. The old man, busy with a great map of the railroad system of Brazil, looked up with his customary frown.

"Well?" he demanded sharply. "What is it?"

"I want a few words with you," said his nephew.

"Go ahead," said the old capitalist.

"I want it with you, not with you and the map of Brazil," Norman said calmly.

Stanford had an air which gave the world the impression of chronic bad temper. His red face, white hair and angry little blue eyes had the look of a fighter. In his early days he had fought hard for his success, and he had never divested himself of the suspicion that even his friends and few relatives were assuming a role of devotion for the purpose of being remembered in his will. He instantly assumed that Norman had become involved in monetary trouble, gambling perhaps, and reveled in the prospect of the lecture he would read him before putting his signature to the saving check. He rose from the chair at the table, seated himself at a more comfortable one by the fire and lighted a cigar.

"Now," he exclaimed, "I'm ready; go ahead."

"Helen and I are no longer engaged," said his nephew. "I thought you ought to know."

"What have you been doing?" said Stanford. "What made her turn you down now?"

Norman hesitated a moment. "There was nothing specific, and it can hardly be said that she 'turned me down.' I think we recognize that we are not really fond of each other."

"You don't want me to believe that it was your doing, do you?" said the old man irately.

"I only want you to know that it is over," returned the other. "The whole thing was a mistake."

"A mistake! Hell!" cried Stanford. "You liked her well enough at first. What is it now? Some showgirl here? Some beauty from the Jardin de Paris?"

"I don't think it's profitable to discuss it any more," said the other pacifically.

"I think otherwise," decided Stanford. "If Helen broke it off, it's nothing more than you deserve. If you broke it off, it's a cowardly, black-guardly action—and you shall suffer for it!"

"I am perfectly willing to take your blame," cried the younger man, with an appearance of heat. "That will be nothing new. But I'm not going to live so that every moment I have to reproach myself. And that's what I should have to do if I married Helen. I love someone else. I loved her before I met Helen, and if I can't marry her I swear I'll marry no one else."

"We shall see," said the old financier grimly. "I'll settle her. What's her name? Where does she live?"

"Do you think," asked Norman Dunstan quietly, "that I am going to put it in your power to insult her? Do you think I should be any kind of a man if I let you go round and shout her down and frighten her? Exercise a certain amount of reasonableness, and you'll see it's impossible."

"Very well," Stanford exclaimed; "let it go at that. But you understand what this means to you and your prospects, I suppose?"

"I've thought it out very carefully," returned his nephew, antagonized by the old man's sneers. "It means that I'm going to give you the opportunity to carry out the threat that I've heard a hundred times. It means that you will be able to disinherit me. Well, then, disinherit me. I shan't come begging for money. Helen sneered, too, and said I should have to work as a sandhog. If I do, I'll make a damned good sandhog! You can't frighten me by telling me such stories. You're always saying the Stanfords are fighters, and that's why you've won. I've Stanford blood in me, too. My mother was a Stanford, wasn't she?"

He towered up a splendid specimen of humanity. "I shan't be a sandhog long!"

"And that's all?" asked the old man coldly.

Norman looked at him more kindly. "No, that isn't all," he replied. "I'm very sorry that I have to leave you like this. You've been very good to me in many ways, and I thought that at last we were going to pull together better."

"The remedy is in your own hands," said Stanford quietly. "Return to Helen."

Dunstan shook his head vigorously. "That's absolutely out of the question," he said.

"And you've counted the cost? You know, what being cut off without a red cent means?"

Dunstan was extraordinarily cheerful about it. "I've thought it over very carefully."

"Shut the door when you go out," said the old man. "The draft makes my feet cold."

Norman had hoped to shake his hand, but plainly such an attempt would not be welcomed. "Good-bye," he said. The Stanford grunt alone answered him.

The old man did not return to his map of Brazil. He went to a drawer in his writing table and took out a package containing many photographs. The oldest of them was of a pretty woman with a small curly-headed child. It was a picture of Stanford's sister and her child Norman. There were no more photographs of her, but Norman was there in every other. He was shown at play and at school. He was there in Princeton's orange and black, standing with a group of other gridiron heroes. There was a picture of him taken in midair the winter he won the skiing championship at St. Moritz. And there were innumerable references to his prowess on athletic fields, clipped from the New York press. Stanford replaced them carefully and resumed his chair by the fire. His face was redder than ever, and there was a suspicion of dimness in his eyes that had rarely been seen.

"Disinherit him, indeed!" he muttered. "I'm to be dictated to in my own house, am I? I'm to cut him off without a red cent, so that he can dig in tunnels and earn two dollars a day! Turn the only being I like out of doors because he can't hit it off with that Beckford girl! No, sir; I'll leave him every dollar I've got!"

VIII

AFTER Helen Beckford had left her, Daphne sat by the wretched fire until it died down, leaving her room cold and desolate. But whatever might be the state of her feelings, there was work to be done on the morrow, and she crept into bed to get what sleep she could. There had been times in her life, notably at Florence and Milan, when she had experienced what seemed to her emotion so profound that nothing of wretchedness was left her to bear. But this last blow, this knowledge that the man she loved was engaged to a woman in his own circle, that he had walked with her and taken her back to the only really happy episode of her life knowing all the time that he was behaving falsely to both women, seemed an act of such black treachery that she winced as she thought of it. She did not conceal the knowledge that she loved him.

It seemed a kind of fate, she thought, that would not permit her to obtain any joys outside of her work. She must be, she supposed, one of the women whom love passes by. There could be no question of another man. She would work harder than ever, and forget everything else. And even as she made this resolve, there came to her the dread which had sometimes haunted her during the long, still hours of sleepless nights, the dread lest she might be denied happiness even in hard work. Bonmarais had been very dissatisfied of late with her progress. He grumbled continually that her middle register was so weak and did not match the upper register. She tried to drown these doubts by promising herself that she

would listen to his every suggestion and perfect her already considerable knowledge of music in theory.

She felt very weak and small and tired, and, above all, oppressed with a great sense of loneliness. It would be better not to see Norman Dunstan again. She felt she had not strength for a scene which would tax her very soul. She would write a letter saying coldly that she did not wish to see him any more. Her final sentence should congratulate him on his engagement. He would know then that she had heard everything.

It was past ten when she awoke. She dressed herself wearily and went out to get milk, butter and rolls for her breakfast. On her way back she came upon Dunstan. She looked at him dully. "Why have you come?" she asked in a toneless voice.

"This afternoon seemed so far off," he retorted gaily. He looked at her more closely. The strain of the night was upon her. "What is the matter?" he demanded. "How ill you look!"

"I was going to write a letter to you," she said.

"What for?" he asked. "You surely didn't think I was going to forget the Palais de Glace and our drive this afternoon, did you?"

"I was going to say I couldn't come," she said.

"But you must," he said masterfully. "I won't hear any excuse. I suppose it's this wretched singing. Give it up just for once, Daphne."

By this time they had come to the house where she lived. It was a part of her agreement with the landlady that she might, if the need arose, receive visitors in the sitting room on the first floor. It was a privilege of which she had not hitherto availed herself. It was better, she thought, that she should tell him there than in the crowded streets.

"I think you had better come in," she said. "I have a great deal to say to you."

He glanced at her keenly, filled with a sense of disquiet. She had never before appeared so distraught.

"My singing," she said, "demands that I work all the time. I have made no friends in Paris for that very reason. It was very pleasant to see you again, but I want to say good-bye to you now."

He looked at her in amazement. Her attitude staggered him. Yesterday he had seen a soft light in her eyes that had thrilled him. But yesterday he had no right to speak. Today he was a free man.

"Absurd!" he exclaimed. "What an unnatural life! You're thin and ill because you work too hard. What a ridiculous excuse!"

"I was never more serious," she said gravely.

"And I have never been more serious than when I tell you I won't say good-bye!" he cried. "I've found you again, Daphne, when I thought you were lost, and I'm not going to give you up."

"Would you wish to persecute me?" she demanded, still in her level, strained voice.

"How can you say that?" he demanded. "Persecute you! Who ever called friendship persecution?"

"I do not want your friendship," she replied.

"Dear," he said softly, "I came to offer you more. I came to tell you that I loved you. I came to take you away from bitter, bleak Paris. I loved you from the first. I had never met anyone like you, and when in my madness I thought you had laughed at me and were playing with me, I said things that were hard to forgive. But you forgave me," he continued eagerly; "you gave me your hand on it yesterday." He looked at her white face almost in fear. "Daphne, Daphne, can't you say something? You won't send me away?"

"I don't want your love," she said. "What sort of a man can you be to offer me the love that belongs to Miss Beckford?"

"God!" he cried. "How did you know that?"

The hardest part of her struggle was over. There was not, indeed, any rush of indignation to spur her on or

lend her invective. She cared for him too much for that, but the pain was duller now. He had confessed in his last sentence that she was right, and he had been false to two women.

"It doesn't matter," she returned. "It's true."

"It isn't!" he cried. "It isn't! Last night I saw her and broke it off. It was mockery that we two should marry. There was no love. I drifted into it when, after I had written to Bonmarais, I thought you were never to be found. After yesterday I knew I could never marry anyone but you. I broke it off."

It is one of the bitterest ironies of life that truth can wear so easily the character of falsehood. There was no doubt in the girl's mind that he lied. But she had no doubt, either, that he loved her. But what was it worth if he had promised to marry Helen and amused himself with her? She did not falter in her course. "It is quite idle to discuss it any more," she told him.

"Is it just," he pleaded, "that I should not be given a chance to defend myself?"

"You've had it," she said, "and you've lost. You must see that this is very unpleasant for me, Mr. Dunstan. I am not very well; I want all my energies for my work, and this distresses me very much. Haven't I put it plainly enough? I do not want your friendship, and your offer of love is an insult."

"An insult!" he cried. "Shall I ever be able to believe in anything again? When I found you again I told Helen I could never marry her. I told my uncle that I loved someone else, and he disinherited me promptly. I came to you free, offering my love and my life and everything I possess. And I came thinking that you cared for me. Dear, if there's any wretched doubt in your mind, why not tell me? Perhaps you've heard some garbled tale that I could clear up! Why should we be miserable because pride on your part stands in the way? Why should both our lives be ruined?"

She nerved herself for her last and bitterest effort.

"Mine wouldn't be," she said, "for the reason that I care nothing about you. At Milan I liked you. I should have liked you still but for what Miss Beckford told me."

"You've seen her?" he cried. "Has she dared to come here and lie about me?"

She felt she could not bear a prolongation of the scene. If she could not get him away she felt hysteria would seize her.

"Won't you understand," she said, "that I don't want your friendship or your love? Can't you see that I haven't a shred of belief in you and never can have? I don't know why you affect to misunderstand me."

Her last phrase stung him to the quick. He had used it only last night to Helen.

There was borne upon him the knowledge that he had failed, and failed because some malignant fate had poisoned her mind against him. It was a defeat without a chance of victory.

"I'll go," he said quietly. "You have behaved very strangely and very unkindly. I never thought myself good enough for you, but there is nothing I have done in all my life that merited such a punishment. If I could only know that you had good friends I should not grieve so much for you. If you ever want a friend, and can bring yourself to trust me, I shall be very proud to serve you."

Daphne watched him cross the room, let himself out and pass down the steps out of sight. With him went the only love that had come into her life. She was truly heir to the capacity for sorrow.

Bonmarais was surprised next day to hear Daphne say that she did not wish to have any more lessons.

"What!" he cried. "You think you know all I have to teach?"

"I know all I can learn from you," she said with a faint smile. "No, monsieur, it is not that. It is because I have waked at last to see that my

voice will never be to me what I hoped. I worked hard with Ermanetti, and you cannot say I have not worked hard with you. My voice was not worth the training."

"*Tiens!*" he commented. "What will you do? Go back to America?"

"That I can't say," she answered. "But I am very grateful for your kindness, and I wish you would let me have your account. I have been with you seven months today."

Bonmarais was not an ungenerous man, but he was pressed for money and the few hundred francs that she owed would be helpful. "I will send it tonight," he said, stretching out his hand. "*Au revoir*. Let me have your address; I may be able to get an engagement for you." There was no time for more; another pupil was waiting, and Daphne went slowly to her home. It was no comfort to call to mind that Bonmarais had held out no hopes that further study would bring her success. She had seen that he felt it wise. There was even pity in his glance.

The singing master sent her the account that night, and by the same mail despatched a letter to Hilary Lowndes. The bill was staggeringly large, the girl thought. Four hundred and fifty francs! But when she reckoned that she had received ninety lessons she found he had charged only five francs a lesson. For some pupils he charged as high as twenty, she had heard. Lowndes's intervention had alone made it possible to pay her debt.

She sent him a cheque with her usual impulsiveness and then sat down to study her bank book. It revealed the fact that there was left exactly two hundred and fifty francs. Fifty dollars! She could have got home to America second class from Paris with this amount, if she had not owed thirty francs in small amounts.

For very existence, therefore, she must make money in Paris. Her musical knowledge would stand her in good stead, and her French and Italian were excellent. She might even become a teacher of music in a good school, and thus save money and

live content. It would be a fall from the lofty dreams of a year ago, but heaven compared with the terrible uncertainty of her present existence.

In two days she had visited all the school agencies, and had learned that the teacher without experience has no niche in the school world of Paris. From the agents she visited certain stores patronized by Americans and English. In them she had seen sometimes notices that governesses were wanted. It might be that they could procure for her some such position. When they heard that she had been living in the city for many months as a student of singing and had no references they told her it was impossible.

A certain diffidence had kept her from going to the musical agencies. She had known so much bitter sorrow over her voice that she was constrained to try almost anything else. She cherished the faint hope that she had overworked it, and that a long rest might bring it back better and stronger than before. She told the agent that she had sung at "at homes" in New York. He listened respectfully.

"It will not be easy," he said, "but it may be I can get an engagement for you among your own compatriots." He wrote her name in a book and remarked without looking up: "Of course, mademoiselle understands that she will be expected to wear her most *chic* gowns at these affairs."

"Naturally," responded the girl, who was wearing her best at the moment and knew it was utterly unsuitable for any smart function. The story of the next three weeks was one of monotonous failure. At a second-hand dealer's she bought two costumes which were almost new, and in one of them waited upon the agent, who brightened up as he saw her. Every day for three weary weeks she called upon him, to learn of no new fortune.

She had heard of an American who had established a large agency for concert and *café chantant* singers. He proved to be an old acquaintance, a former tenant in the Carnegie Hall studio.

"Say, this is luck!" he said heartily. "Can I do anything for you—sure I can! Sit down and sing something." He stopped her after a few bars. "No, that won't do," he objected. "My people want things lively."

He listened to "Florian's Song." "That's better," he said; "but haven't you anything that gets a laugh?"

"I'm afraid not," she said.

"Tomorrow at ten," he said. "I'll see you then."

When she called he was still exceedingly cheerful.

"I've got this *café chantant* agency all to myself," he said. "They're slower than Philadelphia here, and I can run the risk of trying an experiment with you. Most of my girls sing little songs like those Yvette Guilbert used to sing. Parisians expect them. You don't know any, and wouldn't like to learn, I suppose, eh?"

"No," she said, "I shouldn't."

"Quite right," he returned. "Glad of it. But that's where my experiment comes in. I'll put you on at a place where the two other singers sing the Yvette type. You are sandwiched between them, and instead of what they expect, you give 'em '*Chanson de Florian*' and '*Le Sais-Tu*.' I tell you you'll score. Are you on?"

It was an alternative from which a month ago she would have shrunk appalled. But with only a few francs left, the old horror of penury returned. "When shall I come?" she asked.

"Tomorrow night," he said. "I'll pay ten francs a night. You must get yourself a fancy dress."

Her heart sank. "I have a very nice evening gown," she said.

"Cut it to four inches below the knees, then," he returned, "and wear silk stockings and dainty shoes. You must dress the part. Cheer up, girlie!" he cried when he saw that she looked disappointed. "You'll make a hit, and then the money comes rolling in. They mostly come to the *café chantant* when they are old and worn. You come in fresh as a daisy and hit the bull's-eye. The address is 40 Rue Hydromel. The place is called Le

Toison d'Or. Ask for Monsieur Lammoral. I'll look in before you're through and see how you get on."

For the two dresses which Daphne had purchased from the secondhand dealer she obtained in exchange a dainty costume complete with silk hose, shoes and long gloves. Neither of her gowns could be cut as the agent had suggested. She was word perfect in her songs, and in no wise nervous of her voice. What she dreaded was the crowded room, the tobacco smoke, the bold looks of the men and the companionship of her two comrades who sang risqué songs.

Le Toison d'Or was a second rate café, which had a great name among travelers of a certain class for the quality of its beer. Daphne wrapped her long coat about her new costume and quietly entered the room. It was not yet very crowded. At a table a little way from her one of the singers, her song ended, was drinking with a group of men. Their faces were all the faces of beasts, the girl thought. The woman they toasted was old and worn, and from the delight with which her companions listened to her words, it would seem witty. Now and again one of her jests would reach Daphne's table and the girl flushed. She tried to banish all sounds and sights and gather up courage to move to the end of the room and ask for M. Lammoral. On a little platform a stout man was chatting to the pianist. She divined that this was the man for whom she was to ask.

Before she had braced herself sufficiently, the pianist seated himself at the instrument and another woman commenced to sing. It was a song reeking of filth unredeemed by any suggestion of humor. There was a little refrain which was joined in by most of the habitués. As she listened, horrified, a group of men entered at the door just behind her, and one of them—they were obviously Americans—said in a tone of vexation: "Well, if you insist on seeing Parisian café life of the baser sort, stay here for an hour, but you'll get as sick of it as I am."

She did not dare to turn round, and looked everywhere for a means of escape. There was no longer in her mind any intention of singing, for the speaker was Norman Dunstan. Without noticing her, he passed up the center of the room, conspicuous by his great stature, and with his companions took a seat out of sight. She rose from her place and ran out into the night.

How could she stand up on the little platform after the song she had heard and face him? Perhaps he would get up and go out rather than listen to the song that the place and company would expect from her. Any humiliation would be better than this.

For a few days after this she made no effort to obtain employment. The weather was balmy, and the winds which distressed her had gone. She obtained rest and some welcome measure of comfort in crossing the Petit Pont to the Ile de la Cité. Here the bustle of Paris was stilled, and there was a sense of quietness near Notre Dame which soothed her.

In the little park behind the great cathedral she would sit for hours breathing the spring air. There was not now so much keen anxiety as to what would become of her. Bodily weakness brought her a lassitude she had never known before. She had worn herself out with thinking what practical measures she could take, and had found no answer. Old Mr. Tate, the Richmond lawyer, was dead. His two daughters had entered an enclosed order of nuns and had renounced the right to possess. She had no relatives. And she felt she had no friends. Norman Dunstan she tried to banish from her mind. The friendly little agent—how could she go to him after leaving him in the lurch? It was nearly seven one April evening when she looked up from her seat to see Hilary Lowndes standing before her. Oddly enough, it was of him she was thinking.

"I was thinking of you," she said when she had taken his offered hand.

"Pleasant thoughts, I hope," he answered. "Tell me."

She shrank from it. It had been easy to imagine herself asking him to loan her a small sum sufficient to allow her to reach New York. Here, sitting at his side, she found it very difficult.

"How goes the singing?" he demanded.

"It's gone," she returned, with the ghost of a smile. "I went down to defeat."

"That's bad," he said slowly, looking gravely at her. "What's to be done?"

"I thought," she faltered, "of going home and trying there. I had some small success in New York before I grew so ambitious."

"When do you go?" he demanded.

She hesitated. "I don't know yet," she said. "You see, I have been rather careless with my accounts, and I can't get home yet."

"Something must be done," he asserted.

"I was wondering," she commenced, "if you would be kind enough to lend me the amount. I would pay you back. Not with my voice, but by other work."

"Do you owe much?" he asked.

"I owe a Russian woman some," she said. "It's very painful to ask you, but you were very kind once before." She looked at him wistfully.

"My dear girl," he replied with a smile, "I never give money."

She flushed. "I asked for a loan, Mr. Lowndes."

"A loan to a person without assets and without the prospect of any money is a gift, call it what you will," he returned deliberately. "And I never make gifts of money." There was a certain air of satisfaction about him for which she could not account. In her remembrances of him he had been courteous and kind. She did not know that in response to Bonmarais's letter he had crossed the Atlantic, and by diligent inquiries of Madame Dubont had learned how it was with her lodger financially. He had planned such a moment as this a year ago, when he had seen her in the Fifth Avenue drawing-room. He saw how thin she

was, how pale, and how her clothes hung badly upon her. But he was not the same lovesick lad who a quarter of a century before had laid his all at the little feet of Elise de Jourdain. He had grown calculating and crafty. For he had found that it is as well to enjoy the smiles of the world as its frowns, and to be known and trusted than to bear the reputation of a *debauché*. He was sorry for her, but she was young, and in a few months the thin arms would get back their beautiful curves and the lips the redness which semi-starvation had banished.

"I suppose you are right," she said. "I am sorry I humiliated myself."

"What are your plans?" he demanded, watching her carefully.

"I don't know yet," she said desperately. "Good-bye."

"Not yet," he cried. "I have a lot to say to you."

After a moment's hesitation she sank back on the bench. "Well?" she queried.

"Daphne, my dear," he said softly, "haven't you ever guessed that I loved you? Wasn't there anything in your woman's heart to tell you that? You remind me of someone I used to love years ago, only you will be more beautiful than she was. Let us leave all this gray, cold, cheerless Paris and go into the South. The South is in your blood, Daphne, and every nerve in you cries out for color and warmth. What have you ever known of love or color in your poor little cramped, starved life? My yacht is lying at Marseilles, all ready for us. We can go to all the countries that you've dreamed about, and I shall see your pale face getting its color back again, and you'll be able to forget all this misery. Poor, pale, little Daphne, haven't you ever wanted to be beautifully dressed? I don't mean with the poor dresses your little fortune bought you, but with dresses that make other women gasp with envy! And you've never had any jewels, I suppose. Daphne, you shall have all you want. I wonder how rubies would look in your black hair, or diamonds about your

throat? Daphne, Daphne, the *Pearl of the Sea* lies waiting for us at Marseilles. Will you come?"

Throughout the whole of his impassioned speech the image of the man she loved was before her. In her hour of bitter trial his image had never shone so clearly. And what though her life was one of the little dull lives that make up life, and lacked color and warmth, she could find these nowhere where he was not.

"I shall never marry," she said softly.

He looked at her in amazement.

"You will never marry! Who spoke of marriage?" He laughed ironically. "My dear girl, do you suppose I asked you to marry me?"

He held her by the wrists and forced her back to the seat from which she was rising. "My dear child, don't attempt any heroics. Don't talk about insults and your defenseless position and nonsense of that sort. Just consider it calmly. Here you are absolutely without means. Since you are half French, and your father lived here and died not a mile from where we are sitting, I doubt if the American Consul would feel he could help. Who *will* help? You've tried all the agencies, and you cannot get a sou. There's nothing left but my protection. I swear to you, Daphne, I love you. You make my heart beat maddeningly for you. I adore you. There is nothing that my wealth offers that you cannot have. Bonmarais told me that your voice is not without hope. He says that you will never do anything while you worry and mope and live unhappily. Yours is the nature that demands all the luxuries of life to do yourself justice. Instead, you've lived lonely, overworked and half starved yourself. Certain failure lies along that way. And my way? Daphne, what is marriage, after all, but a link that can be snapped so easily that it's worthless? It's more honest not to go through the mockery of a service. Love always comes to an end. With us, when it does, we can shake hands as sincere friends and go our different ways. I have always been generous in affairs

of this kind, but with you it will be vastly different. If we part, you will be able to live in luxury and make your career with your voice. Daphne, you've always believed there was a fortune in your voice. Ermanetti believed it; Bonmarais believed it, and I believe it, too. But you're a singer with a temperament, and you can't live as you've been doing. None of them have ever done anything handicapped as you are. Don't you owe something to yourself?"

She looked at him with an expression he did not understand.

"Yes," she said slowly, "I owe something to myself."

"It's certain you owe nothing to the world," he returned. "It is your vocation to sing. Very well; I will put it in your power to sing." The voice he had tried to preserve firm and level was almost tremulous. "What is it to be?"

"You say you love me—"

"I do!" he insisted. "As heaven's my witness, I love you!"

"And yet when I ask a loan of you, a very rich man, you refuse."

"It's because I love you," he said, "that I won't have you working yourself to death. Do you think I could sleep if I thought your little white hands had to get rough and coarse at some uncongenial work trying to pay me?"

"So you offer me this—this shameful thing!"

"I offer you the only chance to be free that ever your relatives or friends or all the people in the world have offered you," he cried. "You've never lived; you know nothing. All that life has to offer is a sealed book to you. Are your silly little immature prejudices to cramp you forever? How can the artist in you awake unless you have the whole wide horizon before you? And, my dear," he continued softly, "I love you. I saw you one little year ago, and I've thought of nothing else since. I'm not a cruel man. I will provide you with everything you want. There's nothing beyond your reach." Her silence, he

argued, promised well. He had some fear at first of the usual hysterical protestations. There was nothing, as he knew, like the gaunt figure of indigence to banish the smug idols of convention.

"I can arrange all my affairs tomorrow," he whispered. "And we can start by the night mail to the South. I will see Madame"—he mentioned a world famed *costumière*—"and tell her that you will be there in the morning. *Carte blanche*, remember. They can get you some things in a hurry, at any rate." He looked with scorn at the things she was wearing. "Burn that hideous gown. In a month you shall be the best dressed woman in the world. Do you want any money now? Of course, you do." He took out some bills of large denomination. She waved them aside. "Not yet!" she cried.

"You are silly not to take it," he said. "There are hundreds of things you ought to get." His face brightened. "Tell Madame to get them—shoes, anything. Our train leaves the Gare de Lyons at ten. Better still, dine with me at Voisin's. Yes, that's the best way. I'll call for you. I'll be there at about seven."

She smiled at him for the first time. He had never known how beautiful a white, pinched face could be.

"I'd rather you called for me here," she said.

"Here!" he cried. "What a strange idea!"

"Is it too strange for you to humor me?" She looked at him with her enigmatic smile. "Is it too hard?"

There was no request she could have made that he would not have granted that spring evening. She was fanciful in her notions, he supposed. Perhaps she wanted to flaunt her happiness before the genius of the place where she must have spent many unhappy hours. Women were very queer at times, and this was, after all, a little thing. His automobile could wait in the Place du Parvis Notre Dame while he came to the little quiet garden. He was not

sure that there was not something pretty in the idea; it was better than stopping before her wretched house and having curious eyes staring through ugly windows.

"I shall find you at this seat, then?" he questioned.

She laughed a little liquid laugh that fascinated him. "I can't promise to sit on this seat," she said. "It may be occupied. Is it asking such a great thing? Is it so far to come?"

"I'd follow you all over the world!" he cried ardently.

"I shall be near here, at all events," she said more soberly. "You needn't search the whole Ile. I shall be only a stone's throw away."

"You can't escape," he exclaimed gaily. "I shall be here at seven."

He held out his arms. "Daphne, mayn't I have one kiss?"

She smiled, but warded him off. "Not yet," she said. "Can't you wait till you come tomorrow?"

"I suppose I must," he returned ruefully. "Is there anything you want me to get you for tomorrow? You're very silly not to get what you want yourself. What money I have will be yours, Daphne."

"But it isn't yet," she smiled. "Yes, there's one thing. Bring me some flowers."

"I'll bring you an armful of wonderful scarlet and yellow orchids!" he cried.

"I want something quieter," she said. "Bring me white lilies."

"It's done!" he exclaimed. "But where are you dining tonight? We can't go to Voisin's dressed as we are, but there are many other places. Why should we waste a minute of our lives?"

"I'm busy tonight," she responded. "I have to set my house in order. I want to walk home alone and think. There are so many new things to consider."

She watched him walk off, trim, debonair, the perfectly groomed man of the world, and sighed. There were things to think about and much to be done before he saw her again.

IX

SINCE the time when he had defied his uncle there had been a cordiality of relations between Mr. Stanford and Norman Dunstan which was very pleasant for them both. Like many men, Mr. Stanford had not been aware of the strength of his affection until there was a likelihood of losing the object on whom he had bestowed it. His old gruff manner had concealed a good heart. It was his disguise merely. But it was a disguise so good that he had to discover himself to Norman and tell him that he depended on him and could not be without him. The old man was distressed that since the engagement had been broken off between Norman and Miss Beckford the young man had been quieter, more abstracted and not the lad he had known of yore.

The old man in his new character did not ask the blunt, disconcerting questions as of old. He hoped that when the time came his nephew would tell him. The two had just arranged the details of the trip the younger man was shortly to take to Buenos Aires in connection with the railroad merger. It was a change which Dunstan had welcomed until it drew near. Then he saw that it meant banishment from the possible chance of meeting Daphne again, a hope that never died.

More than ever he had thought of her lately. The feeling was constantly with him that she was in trouble and needed him. But he dared not intrude on the privacy she had expressly said she desired.

"I think," he said, "I'll go round to the club for an hour before dinner. Is there anything you want me to do for you first?"

"Nothing," declared his uncle cheerfully. "Go and have a game of billiards."

There were few people in the club, and in the smoking room one only. This man, King by name, he knew intimately.

"You must have met Lowndes going out," said King.

Dunstan nodded his head. "I just saw his back."

"He doesn't seem to have any use for you," said King.

"He hardly knows me," returned the other. "Feel like a game of billiards?"

"Not a bit," said King. "I couldn't see a ball. I came in here to get a *café noir*, when Lowndes blew in and insisted on my drinking champagne to celebrate his luck. The stuff is fizzing round in my head like fury. A magnum, no less, my boy. It certainly started Hilary talking. Usually he's as close as a clam, but he opened up today, all right."

"What luck was it?" demanded Norman idly.

"Most romantic," said King, closing his eyes. "The *Pearl of the Sea*, or the waves, or something—his great steam yacht—is fitted up and lies all ready for the conquering hero tomorrow. He and the lady are going to the southern seas to hunt for coral necklaces."

"What lady?" said Dunstan impatiently. "I know nothing about his amours."

"Why, the girl you were after, too." King, who had the reputation of being a heavy drinker, looked at him with solemn sympathy. "Hard luck, old man!" he said unsteadily. "Hard luck! But we can't all win. Some of us have to be the 'also rans' of love."

Dunstan looked at him with faint amusement. "If I thought another drink would chase that champagne out of your empty cranium I'd buy you one, but you'd recite more of Lowndes's fairy tales if I did."

"They were damned interesting tales," said King genially. "I felt the tears come into my eyes when he told me how they met in Notre Dame every day."

"Notre Dame?" queried Dunstan.

"Well, then, in the little park behind it. They hold hands and stroll up and down the Ile all day long. Didn't think it was in old Hilary to do it. It's a fact," he reiterated, seeing a look of doubt on the other's face.

"She's there still. Let's go and serenade her."

"Ordinarily you're an amiable sort of ass," said Dunstan, "but when you've been getting outside of cocktails and magnums you confuse identities. You probably think I'm the Empress of China or the Knave of hearts. In reality, my name is Dunstan."

"Don't I know it?" retorted the aggrieved King.

"If you do, what makes you accuse me of being Lowndes's rival? We hardly know each other. I doubt if I've spoken twenty words to him in my life."

"Oh, come off!" cried the other cheerily. "Don't try that game on little Billy King. He confided everything in me; and that proves," he continued conclusively, "that he had more of that magnum than I did, because he rarely drinks before dinner, and he doesn't regard me as a very desirable acquaintance. I heard him tell someone that myself. You basely tried to steal his little art student away. You went to her studio and asked Julien where she lived." King put his hand to a buzzing head. "No, it was a little singing student. You tried to steal his little songbird away. It's no use telling me you didn't," he concluded crossly, "because Lowndes is a man of honor, and he told me you did. But Lowndes won, after all. Southern seas and mermaids and sea pearls—think of it, my boy!"

There was a sudden change in Dunstan's manner. Before, he had regarded King as a poor ass, who had drunk more liquor than he could carry and was not to be taken seriously. He looked at him now with eyes that blazed. King felt the other's powerful hand on his shoulder.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Did he tell you her name?"

"Couldn't drag it out of him," declared King, who saw with content that his friend's manner was pacific. "He said he hadn't any use for you."

"But about the girl," cried Dunstan—"What did he say about her? What was her name?"

"I can only repeat that she's a little protégée of his from the South."

Dunstan released his hold and walked rapidly toward the door.

"What's the good of asking me, if you know?" King shouted. "I don't wonder Lowndes doesn't like you!"

Walking unsteadily to the window, he beheld Dunstan rush down the steps and hail a taxicab. "Now I wonder what the devil's the matter with him?" he soliloquized stupidly.

It was not yet completely dark when the cab crossed the Pont d'Arcole. He dismissed it in the Rue du Clôître, and made his way to the quiet little open space. He half hoped that he would meet Lowndes; he would have taken him by the throat and forced him to confess to what King had said. Although the whole evidence, weighed carefully by a legal mind, was worthless, yet Dunstan knew with an absolute certainty that King had in his blundering way shown him the key to everything. The half-drunken fool had declared that the meeting place between the two was this same Ile de la Cité, and that on the morrow they were sailing for southern seas. And he had said, too, that she was still here.

There were not many people about, and he came to the last seat in the park very quickly. Seated on it, looking into the distance with eyes that had not seen him, was Daphne. He spoke to her in a harsh voice, that was the result of the almost incredibly poignant emotion that filled him. "What are you doing here?" he demanded.

It seemed some moments before he came into her focus.

"Oh! Why have you come back to torture me?" she wailed.

"I've come to save you," he cried.

"No one can do that," she said.

"You least of all."

"I can and will," he said rapidly.

"Listen, Daphne. I have not come back to say I love you or want you to love me. That's all blotted out and forgotten. I've come to you as a brother might come to a sister—as your brother would have come to

you, if you'd had one, or as I should have gone to a sister. You're in trouble, Daphne—you're in desperate trouble."

"That's almost at an end," she said slowly. "I was thinking about it when you came. I was away in the South, wondering what would have happened if I had been blessed with relatives who loved me. I was seeing again all the stupid mistakes I have made and the wrong people I have trusted. It seems to me I have just blundered through life."

For a moment neither of them spoke. Then she looked at him a little suspiciously. "How did you find me out here?" she demanded.

"Lowndes has been talking," he returned gravely.

For a moment he thought she was going to faint. There seemed no blood in her face, and even the lips were white.

"So you know?" she whispered.

He looked at her, entreary in his face. "I know," he said. "But, Daphne, aren't there other ways than that of lightening your burdens?"

"I haven't come to this without struggling. I've always been struggling," she cried. "And if I go down to defeat, it's because it's all predestined that I should. You don't know—you wouldn't understand if you did—how I have striven to live so that my mother, of whom I have heard only from old colored servants, would never be ashamed of me. Until today I have never been without hope, but that's gone now."

"It isn't," he said eagerly. "It isn't gone. Listen, Daphne—"

She put her hands over her ears. "I don't want to listen," she said. "The plans I made are the best plans, and nothing you can ever say will alter them. Do you think to come here and with a few words make me abandon what I have thought is best and inevitable? It's unreasonable of you."

"And I had such hopes of you," he said quietly. "I thought you were as far above all the other women that I knew as the sun is above the earth."

"I'm not—I'm not!" she cried passionately. "I gave you no reason to think so."

"I have seen you struggle," he continued. "And I have seen you win. And it's because of this that if anyone had told me of your final surrender I would have wagered my soul on its being a lie. I would have gone to eternal torment rather than believe you would choose the easy way. Have you forgotten you're an Elton? Isn't there any of the blood of my old hero in you, bidding you fight as he did at Seven Rivers?"

The girl made no answer. When he had broken in upon the silence with which she had enshrouded herself, she had been putting her house in order. She was, as she had told him, going over the incidents of her early life. He had intruded upon this and dragged her back to a remembrance of episodes which she had done her best to blot out. For some time she had looked upon him as designed by fate never to belong to her or to bring her happiness. She regarded his intrusion as the bitter prolongation of an agony from which she had prayed to be spared.

"They tell me," he continued, "that Lowndes has his yacht waiting at Marseilles, and that you and he start tomorrow. Did he make that infamous proposal to you?"

"Mr. Dunstan," she returned after a pause, "my knowledge of you has always brought me sorrow. In all my life there have been no bitterer humiliations than I have suffered at your hands. Is it just, is it right, is it kind that you should force yourself on me now? I desire, more than you can think, to be alone." Her voice faltered. "I am trying to make my peace with God."

His voice sounded very harsh, and his face was grown gray and old.

"I cannot go away," he said, "and leave you like this. I cannot believe what you tell me. It isn't true, Daphne. I heard that you and he meet here under the shadow of Notre Dame."

"It's true," she interrupted. "He

comes for me tomorrow here—under the shadow of Notre Dame."

"If I were a religious man," he said, "I would try to appeal to you through your sense of duty to God. I have tried to make you see the shame you are bringing on the memory of your grandfather. I have tried to make you see what you owe yourself. Is it too late?"

"Nothing can alter my resolve," she answered.

There had been in his mind the thought that this final solution of her difficulties had been taken in very desperation at her needs. And in his perplexity that she had succumbed he had lost sight of the possibility that she cared for Lowndes. It came to him in a flash that he was a man for whom many women had cared, and why not she? Filled with the most intense emotion, he had no room at such a time for jealousy. The possibility of her love for Lowndes brought with it only a sense of relief. The horrible sordid aspect of the case was banished in a measure.

"I never thought of that," he whispered.

"Of what?" she asked.

"That you might love him."

He rose from the seat and looked down on her, still sorrowfully, but not with the look of utter despair that his face had previously worn. "Good-bye," he said.

She watched him walk a few paces. Then the thought that he must throughout his life misjudge her was more than she could bear.

"Come back!" she cried.

He stood silently at her side.

"I hate him!" she exclaimed. "How could you think that I loved him?"

"I wish you did," he returned. "I could understand it better then."

She rose from the bench and stood at his side. "Listen," she said. "I wanted you to go away and never give another thought to me. If I were strong I should have let you go. But I'm weak enough to want you to think better of me than you do. I told you I was to meet him here tomorrow. I'll show you where."

Not comprehending, he walked by her side out of the little park and along the Quai de l'Archevêché until they came to a little squat, red building that Paris knows as the Morgue. "He would have found me there," she said simply.

He walked back to the little garden behind the cathedral, not daring to say a word. There was no excuse he might make that would not sound like a clumsy lie. He had doubted her for the second time. He had judged her so weak that she feared to die, when in very truth she had feared to live at the price offered her. For the moment he could not think what must be done, but he felt that she could be saved without needing to know of his part in it.

Presently he noticed that she swayed in her walk and nearly fell. It was an attack of faintness coming upon her—the tired heart's cry for rest. She spoke in a small, clear voice. "I think I'm going to faint. I haven't had much to eat today."

As she fell he caught her and carried her to a seat. He had never thought a woman of her height could weigh so

little. The sharp bones of her arms and shoulders dug into him. She had wasted terribly during the last month, and looked so pale and fragile that the tears came into his eyes. Great sobs shook him, the terrible sobs of a man which rack the most powerful frame. She was so still that he feared it must be the quiet of death. There was a light rain falling, and the Ile seemed deserted; but he would not have cared if the park had been thronged. Nothing existed for him but the girl in his arms, the girl whom he loved. Presently the dread seized him that her heart had stopped. He must carry her to a physician at once. As he passed a light he paused to look into her face. And as he gazed it seemed that some faint color was returning to her lips and cheeks. Then a tremor ran through her.

"Where am I?" she whispered faintly.

"In my arms, darling," he cried passionately.

She gave a little gasp of content and looked up at him with eyes like stars. "Ah!" she sighed. "How often I have longed to be here!"



IN PARTING

By GERTRUDE BROOKE HAMILTON

SWEET summer breeze that whispered "Stay,"
Blue of a boundless sky,
Sweet summer breath of sun-kissed day,
Sweet summer mirth, good-bye.

Dear summer hours we laughed away—
Lived! Let the old world sigh!
Dear summer dreams of yesterday,
Dear summer lies, good-bye.



WHAT a married woman doesn't know she suspects.

THE MILL OF LIFE

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER CARUTH

SO this is the night you go over it all,
Through it from first to last—
This is the night of the wormwood and gall,
Black with the shrouds of the past,
When you sit in the gloom and watch the ghosts
Of the futures that shouldn't have died,
As they come and go with the shadowy hosts
Of the chances you tossed aside.

Well, here's to what's done—
The mill *will* run—
And here's to all that's been missed!
And there's nothing to it but grist, my son,
Nothing to it but grist!

II

Tonight the spirit is broken and sore
For the fight it shouldn't have lost,
For the right that spent its worth in war,
The victory that cost,
For the friends it should have held for aye,
The foes it shouldn't have found—
And the mad remorse of the wasted day
Revives its torturing round.

But, lost or won,
'Tis over and done,
So tighten your jaw and fist—
For there's nothing to it but grist, my son,
Nothing to it but grist!

III

Tonight the smile of the woman-to-be
Makes recollection grave
With the thought of what one did not see
When the blood was hot and brave.
Tonight the songs that once were sung
Laugh with the girls that were;
Small comfort that youth is known to be young
When the mind would hold but Her!

THE MILL OF LIFE

Well, remember or shun,
 Here's to all that was done,
 And the lips one shouldn't have kissed!
 Oh, there's nothing to it but grist, my son,
 Nothing to it but grist!

IV

This is the night you are sick at heart,
 And weak of stomach, too.
 Thank God for the mill that can do its part
 To grind the grist in you!
 Pity the soul whose surface bears
 On a memory smooth and clean
 The life that only races and wears
 With never a grain between.

All said and done,
 Were it lost or won,
 'Tis little indeed you've missed.
 There's nothing to it but grist, my son,
 Nothing to it but grist!



THE FAR PORT

By JAMES WILLIAM CALLAHAN

THERE is a port beyond the farthest sea,
 Whose placid harbor evermore invites;
 Across its waters gleam no signal lights,
 And solemn silence reigns unceasingly;
 And for that distant port the great, the small,
 Aye, all of us alike shall steer in vain
 When, tossed upon life's ever restless main,
 We drink from memory's bitter cup of gall;
 But, ever faring on and on and on
 By day and night in futile quest, we see
 Before us, where the other ships have gone,
 The trackless vastness of eternity.
 Where is the port? Ah, we can only guess—
 The silent city of Forgetfulness!

MRS. MEECHAM'S "RUINGS"

By DAVID GAULT

THE train stopped at the modest English station, and Stanton, rising with a sigh of relief, seized his hand luggage and descended hurriedly to the platform. It was a comfort to stretch his legs after five hours of travel, and he did it with characteristic thoroughness. Depositing his luggage in a casual heap, he walked swiftly up and down the narrow space the platform afforded, his bright brown eyes looking about him, his mind busy with the taxing problem of what to do next.

This was Cradelford, and Cradelford, judging by the extremely superficial view of it he had thus far enjoyed, was very lovely. The near side of the station was covered with crimson ramblers; the high verdure through which the narrow road took its simple course was flecked with primroses and gorse. A brilliant June sun, high in the fresh blue of the English sky, poured its splendor over the gentle beauty of the earth, while the red roofs of surrounding homesteads seemed, with their homelier color note, to breathe an unobtrusive welcome.

Toward these latter Stanton's alert eyes turned with the most interest. It was tea time, and he had been in England two months—quite long enough to anticipate the advent of that hour. He knew little tables in these English homes were offering their simple lure of very thin slices of bread, and the kettle was ready for afternoon tea. Stanton had breakfasted recklessly at a railway hotel for four shillings, and had then made a second payment for it by a meager

luncheon. His supply of money was almost gone, and he could not afford to go to a hotel. Therefore he must find lodgings, and his healthy appetite, under the slight of the trivial luncheon, urged him to find them now. He seized his cumbersome pieces of luggage and approached the station agent. That gentleman, who had followed his every movement from the moment he left the train, now turned his back abruptly and became lost in dreamy contemplation of the landscape. So absorbed was he, indeed, that Stanton was forced to address him twice before receiving the reluctant tribute of his attention.

"I beg your pardon," said the American punctiliously, "but can you tell me where I can find good lodgings? Good, but not expensive," he added, smiling ingratiatingly, as a man who knew his brother man.

The eyes of the native, now turned upon him, rewarded this diplomacy. An American who admitted that he was poor, and yet smiled over it, had the potential flavor of a personage to his British soul. He replied, however, after due hesitation and with impressive deliberation.

"We 'ave a good many," he admitted guardedly. "Would you like the river or the church?"

Stanton gave the choice a brief but diplomatic consideration, and then cheerfully admitted a preference for both. The station man shook his head sadly.

"It cahn't be done," he declared. "You can 'ave the church, or you can 'ave the river, but you cahn't 'ave

both. I 'ave to explain that to people every day."

He held up his left hand now, and with an accustomed gesture told off his points with the thumb of his right.

"The river's at the lower end of the town," he explained with the automatic deliberation of one who performs a perfunctory task. The quality of his voice changed, taking on the parrotlike character of an infant reciting a well memorized lesson. "The church is at the hupper end. If you want boating, tike the river. If you want the church and its interestin' 'istory and example of early Norman harchitecture, tike the hupper."

Stanton was impressed, and he showed it.

"I think I'll take the upper," he responded appreciatively. "But who in the upper will take *me*, do you think?"

His informant was prepared for this. Practical details flowed from him.

"Mrs. Manning would tike you, most likely," he said glibly, "an' there's others, too. Mrs. Mayrick might 'ave somethin' open; she lets. Or Mrs. Meecham."

"I love my love with an 'M,'" murmured Stanton reflectively. "I think I lean toward Mrs. Meecham," he added aloud. "She sounds most truly British. Does she 'let,' too? Will she—er—feed and sleep me?"

The other nodded and thrust his hat back, as if to cool a brow fevered by mental strain.

"You cahn't do better," he added dispassionately. "Mrs. Meecham's a good-'earted woman, an' they do say 'er tea is prime." He hesitated a moment, and then, with the air of one unburdening himself of an oppressive weight on the conscience, added hastily:

"If you want ruings, you know, you'll get none at the Widow Meecham's. But you can 'ave a good view of the church from 'er rooms on the hupper floor."

Stanton reflected briefly. He decided that "ruings" were a new kind

of scones or some local delicacy in demand, but that their lack would be immaterial. He had been powerfully impressed, however, by the mention of the "prime" tea.

"I'll try Mrs. Meecham," he announced promptly. "Thanks very much. Is she far? Can I walk it with these bags?"

"Ye look strong enough," remarked his new friend graciously. "Go to the top of that 'ill, turn to your right, and there you be. The widow Meecham's 'ouse is little and red. So long."

He added the last two words with diaphanous complacency and an air so saturated with expectancy that Stanton hastened to pay a fitting tribute to this whiff of Broadway.

"I, too, have been in Arcady," he murmured. "You'll be an American some day if you don't watch out," he avowed, then admiringly and by way of good measure he added: "Well, I'll beat it up to Mrs. Meecham's."

He left the native trying to digest this rich slice of the vernacular, and had proceeded some ten or fifteen paces on his way when the voice of his new friend came to his ear.

"If you want ruings, you know," that gentleman was shouting with supererogatory benevolence as Stanton halted, "you can 'ave 'em at Mrs. Mayrick's. Mrs. Mayrick 'as ruings."

Stanton nodded and went on, deciding when he found what "ruings" were to make a note of it, though still satisfied that he could live without them. The sun was now sinking, and the English landscape, mellow in its softened rays, was more beautiful. The atmosphere was wonderfully clear, and the objects about stood out from their green background like silhouettes. Toward him, down the hill, a flock of sheep pattered, driven by a boy. From the trees and hedges came the twitter of languid birds; the air was full of the smell of newly cut hay, and in a nearby field some laborers were piling it high in wagons. A sense of deep content stole over Stanton. This was a fair land, he told himself, and he exulted in the fact that he still lingered

in it, unable to tear himself away even to join his chum Wheeler, with whom he had parted in Paris, and whose latest pathetic appeal to Stanton to return there even now bulged an inner pocket.

The hill was a long one, and his bag and rugs were heavy. But his climb was solaced by a view of the beautiful church he had come to see, and he arrived in front of Mrs. Meecham's little red house in a mood of deep but serene approval of life and of the best possible world. A sad-faced, apple-cheeked, plump old woman leaned over a gate opening into a prim little garden. When she saw his obvious purpose of entering, she swung it hospitably open. Stanton dropped his burdens and stood bareheaded before her, his brown eyes full of appreciation of her home, his lips curved in their winning, boyish smile.

"I am looking for meals and lodgings," he told her, "and the station agent thought possibly you could take me in for a few days."

Her motherly eyes trailed over him from head to foot and brightened as they traveled.

"Come in," she said briefly but pleasantly. "You can see what we 'ave."

There was pathos in her voice, a certain discouraged inflection which caught and held Stanton's attention as he followed her along the path to the front door. It seemed oddly out of keeping with the charm of her surroundings, and with her own winning, homely personality. He bent his tall head to enter her door, but once inside, he shook hands with himself ecstatically behind her ample back. Because the evening was cool a fire was burning on the small hearth, and before it stood a tea table—the tea table of his dreams. A copper kettle sang on a crane. A cat on the rug purred a response to its serenade. A plump woman, older than the other, was already cutting thin slices of bread from a robust loaf. Some member of the family had evidently been a seafaring man, for the old mantelpiece

held shells, a stuffed parrot and several fine bits of china and Oriental carving. Stanton sniffed the aroma of the tea with a betraying grin of approval, and Mrs. Meecham read his thoughts, which indeed she did not need to be a seeress to do.

"We'll 'ave tea first, if you like," she said. "Then you can 'ave a look at the rooms."

A moment later the three were sitting at the table, the two old women waiting on the young man with an interest which had already ceased to be perfunctory. Stanton's enthusiasm charmed them; so did his ready courtesy and his boyish appetite. He ate alarming quantities of bread and butter and cake and jam, talking delightfully all the time, and he drank three cups of tea. Then he leaned back in his chair with a frank sigh of content and beamed ecstatically at his companions.

"Whatever the room is," he said recklessly, "and wherever it is, I'll take it. I couldn't bear to be anywhere else in this town tomorrow and lose this tea."

Mrs. Meecham rose. "You 'ad better look at it first," she said reservedly. She hesitated a moment, and then added, with a heavy sigh: "I may as well tell you, first as last, that we 'aven't got no ruins."

Stanton laughed as he followed her puffing figure up the narrow stairway.

"I was warned of that," he explained placidly. "I don't want them—wouldn't have them. I've never cultivated a taste for them, so you see I won't miss them."

Mrs. Meecham paused in the upper hall, turned to him abruptly and regarded him with an expression made up in equal parts of incredulity and joy.

"You don't like ruins?" she asked suspiciously. Stanton shook his head animatedly.

"Never tried them," he told her, smiling. "But I'm sure I wouldn't."

Mrs. Meecham drew a long breath and threw open a door. She seemed dimly comforted, yet doubtful.

"'Ere's the room," she murmured absently. "It's a shilling the day; breakfast sixpence, tea sixpence, dinner a shilling. Three shillings the day, all told. 'Twould be cheaper by the week, but you're stayin' only a few days, you say. If we 'ad ruings, it 'ud be more."

Stanton looked at the room—fresh, sweet, lavender-scented and with an appealing view of the exquisite old church from both its dormer windows.

"It's perfect," he said warmly. "I'll take it, and I'll pay for four days in advance."

She took the money quietly and with a prim word of thanks.

"You'll be wantin' 'ot water," she said as she turned to go. "Dinner's at seven. You can 'ave it with us or 'ere in your room."

Stanton regarded her ingratiatingly. "I choose to have it with you," he said heartily. "I'll have my breakfast up here, but I'd like to take my other meals with the family."

Mrs. Meecham smiled. Then her face clouded.

"There's no family but sister an' me," she said sadly. "My sister's name is Maxwell. 'Er boy, 'e was a sailor man, lost at sea six years last October. So she's 'ere with me. We'll be glad to 'ave you with us," she added respectfully, "if you don't mind two old women."

Then the sleeping motherhood in her stirred at the sight of the fresh young face before her.

"I never 'ad no children," she said slowly, "but—I'll be glad to 'ave you."

She smiled at him again as she turned away, and Stanton felt a strong impulse to bestow on her the comforting pat on the back which was his characteristic form of endearment for the elderly cousin who was his only living relative.

"She's a dear," he told himself, as he reveled later in the hot water. "But she seems worried half to death over something. She must have a hidden sorrow."

Unsaddened by this dark surmise, he interrupted his toilet to look out

over the distant hills and at the church. It was growing late, and somewhere in the trees below a nightingale was tentatively trying a few deep notes, as if in practice for his recitative later, when the moon rose. Stanton whistled a soft response, and then broke into song himself as he resumed his toilet. Down below the two lonely old women heard him and smiled.

"'Twill be comfortin' to 'ave 'im 'round," murmured Mrs. Meecham. She added reflectively: "'E says 'e don't care for ruings. Think o' that!"

The next morning Stanton was awakened by bells chiming in the old church. He sprang out of bed and threw wider his windows to the glorious English day. He made his toilet rapidly, but the sound of his quick, impatient footsteps had sent their message to the ears below, for his breakfast was served almost before he was ready for it. Mrs. Meecham arranged it on a table close to an open window, and here Stanton devoured eggs, bacon, jam, toast and tea to the accompaniment of bells, the song of birds and the rustle of the old trees, whose branches seemed to wave to him in friendly greeting.

He spent the day in glorious communion with nature, drinking in the beauty of the church in the morning and fishing idly in the river in the afternoon; for he had made the pleasant discovery that residence in the "hupper end" of the town did not necessarily deprive one of the choice delights of boating and fishing in the lower end. After dinner that night he hung over the gate opening from the garden, giving himself up to the pleasure of a cigar, the glory of the moonlight and the reminiscent perfume of the old-fashioned flowers around him. Here Mrs. Meecham found him when she, too, came to enjoy the charm of the June night; and here, partly owing to the solvent peace of the hour and partly to a genuine liking for the kindly old Englishwoman, Stanton revealed to her that he was a divinity student,

doing England on a scholarship, and that he was to be ordained the following year. In return he had an immediate proof of the power of even the embryo clergy to wring vital confidences from the human heart. As if he had touched a hidden spring, Mrs. Meecham's grievances welled forth.

"Yes, it's 'andsome 'ere," she agreed, in answer to his heartfelt tribute to her home and its surroundings. "I ain't sayin' it ain't. But wot I can't rightly make out is 'ow some folks 'as the luck and others 'aven't. No one cahn't deny I'm a Christian, an' I 'ave always been a Christian. But I own there's moments when life don't seem fair. W'y"—her soft voice rose, taking on an almost hysterical note—"w'y should Mrs. Mayrick 'ave ruings an' me not 'ave one?"

Stanton turned and looked at her in the moonlight. Her sweet old face was flushed; her eyes were wet; she seemed on the verge of a breakdown. Before he could speak she went on.

"Ruings Mrs. Mayrick 'as," she added brokenly, "an' not doin' nothin' to deserve 'em, wot I can see. Yet there they be, right in 'er basement, an' every man and woman wot comes to Cradelford payin' a shillin' to be 'old 'em. Why didn't the Lord give us ruings, too? That's wot I want to know. Why didn't 'E? 'E can make ruings in one place as easy as in another."

She regarded Stanton severely as she spoke, and that youth, still wholly at sea as to the cause of her distress, gazed back sympathetically and tried to murmur such vaguely comforting remarks as were possible to his ignorance of what "ruings" were. Her words rushed on unheeding.

"No one denies our tea is better," she remarked bitterly. "No one prefers Mrs. Mayrick's 'ouse to my 'ouse, as a 'ouse." She underlined the last words incisively. "But w'en it comes to choosin', they says, 'Give us ruings,' an' 'hoff they goes to Mrs. Mayrick's."

Stanton seized his opportunity, as she paused for breath.

"Tell me, Mrs. Meecham," he urged with insinuating deference, "what *are* 'ruings'? We don't have them in America, and I haven't been in England long enough to find out. Anyhow, I've never heard of them."

Mrs. Meecham's plump form fell back from the gate, and she opened her mouth in a successful effort to express surprise.

"Ain't 'eard of *ruings*!" she gasped. Then suddenly recalling what she had heard of America and American ignorance, a sense of delicacy stirred in her and she blushed for herself and this ignorant young man.

"It's quite natural you 'aven't 'eard," she explained hastily. "Of course they don't 'ave them in new countries. But in places like England, don't you see, 'tis quite different. 'Underds of years pass, and things get old and broken hup. Then they are ruings, an' people stands and looks at 'em for hours. Most of the ruings 'ere in Cradelford is Roming—Roming ruings, they call 'em. They're a fav'rite kind."

Light flooded her listener. For an instant he was silent, struggling wildly to overcome that sense of humor which his serious interests in life had not yet dimmed.

"I see," he said at last rather faintly. "Thank you so much. We call them Roman ruins at home, too—not that we have any," he added politely. "You're quite right about that. But surely you must have some. I've seen all sorts of odds and ends here in the garden, especially behind the house, that must be Roman—bits of pillars and such. Why don't you try excavating—digging, I mean? You might find some good things—real ruinous ruins."

Mrs. Meecham regarded him wanly. "Do you s'pose we 'aven't?" she demanded. "'Aven't we dug an' dug till we've just about spoiled the garding? An' all we've got out of it"—her voice rose to a wail again—"is them bits of trash—that and tired backs. No one wants to look at *them*."

"I see." Stanton was sympathetic; he understood that it was not the backs people declined to look at. It must be something imposing, to be a ruin. "What has Mrs. Mayrick found?" he asked suddenly.

Mrs. Meecham wiped her eyes. The subject always reduced her to angry tears. Her meek gaze had fire in it now as she answered.

"D'ye suppose I'd look at it?" she demanded superbly. "Them as does pays their shillin', an' they goes into the basement an' they looks. I've 'eard," she added as dispassionately as she could, "it's like a coffin, made of stone."

"Um-m," murmured Stanton; "that must be rather interesting."

That was more than Mrs. Meecham could bear.

"That's it!" she cried wildly. "There ye go! You'll be like all the rest, I'm thinkin', payin' your shillin' tomorrow an' wantin' to live in the 'ouse w're the ruings is."

Stanton laughed. "Not I," he said assuredly. "I can live on gloriously without 'Roming ruings.' Great Scott! Well, by all the— To be talking of 'ruings' and have *you* spring out of the earth!"

The final exclamations were evoked by the sudden looming before them in the moonlight of a familiar figure, dear to Stanton's heart.

"Wheeler!" he shouted. "You here! Of all the luck!"

The two shook hands vigorously, and in the excitement of questions, explanations and much mutual joy, Mrs. Meecham faded away after a brief greeting to her new lodger.

"Couldn't stand it another day," explained Wheeler succinctly. He had a shorthand style of conversation which, he explained, saved much time that then could be devoted to those serious pursuits on which his deepest interests centered. "Getting home-sick. Got your letter saying four days at Cradelford next week. Trotted over to join you. Fellow at station told me you were staying here. Great, isn't it? Don't wonder you're here!"

There were weeks of separation to be bridged and described, and they did it by bedtime. Notwithstanding all the wealth of material for discussion, however, Stanton found time to tell his chum the sad story of the yawning vacuum in Mrs. Meecham's life.

"It's a serious business," he ended. "It's a skeleton in the closet, a worm in the rose, a fly in the soup—every kind of zoological misarrangement that can typify a horrid gap in human happiness. I really think it's sapping her religious faith, too, not to have a 'ruing.' She thinks the Lord has made an invidious distinction in favor of Mrs. Mayrick."

Wheeler pursed his lips.

"Shillings and pounds, too," he observed practically. "Mrs. Mayrick's stone coffin filling her till with coin; *your* old lady just scraping along." He stopped to listen to the nightingale's prodigal song, and to drink in the perfume of the roses. "Think of this not being enough for anybody!" he exclaimed fervently. "I'd rather hear a nightingale than see Stonehenge."

Stanton dreamed of Roman "ruings" that night, and it seemed quite a logical sequence that he should seek Mrs. Meecham's collection of them soon after breakfast the next morning. He was not surprised to find Wheeler already there, smoking a lazy pipe and turning over small "ruings" with an indolent toe.

"Quite a variety," he remarked, nodding to his friend. "Nothing among 'em good, though."

Stanton perched himself on the sharp edge of a slender slab, surveyed the heap of odds and ends and nodded.

"Just the same," added Wheeler thoughtfully, "it could be done." He fell upon the ruins as he spoke, moved them about feverishly for a few moments, cocked his head on one side to observe the effect and finally turned a relieved face toward his friend.

"It could," he repeated vigorously.

Stanton yawned.

"Have you seen Mrs. Meecham this morning?" he asked. "I haven't, and somehow I don't feel that the day has

really begun until I've had a chat with her."

"Spoils you," observed Wheeler shortly. "Saw it at a glance. Empty hearthstone, empty heart now filled and all that. Coddles you as if you were the cat."

Stanton turned red. "She does," he admitted, "and I like it. I suppose when a fellow's never had any of it he takes to it kindly, however late it comes. Now you, with a mother and three sisters all at your feet—you don't need it."

Wheeler softened.

"Maybe," he admitted lightly. "Time you did something for her, though, for a change. Nice old party. Deserves help. Turn your lamps on that. Does that look like anything?"

Stanton obediently surveyed the chaotic mess of stone before him and shook his head. Wheeler frowned, then exploded.

"Lack of imagination the curse of the practical American," he cried. "Thank the Lord, I've got one. Hadn't looked at those things five minutes before I could see a Roman bath. Now I can see a Roman lady in it. Dusky slaves waiting on her. Soft music, waving fans, all the rest."

Stanton stared, then felt a little dizzy.

"What you're seeing is Alma Tadema, not lucrative ruins. You mean—" he ejaculated.

Wheeler nodded.

"Sure thing," he replied affably. "Give us that heap of stones and our brawny arms and one more moonlight night—and if you and I can't make a 'Roming ruing' for Mrs. Meecham, I'll eat the unsuccessful result."

Stanton gazed at the pile of stone and at the wild tangle of shrubs and plants. The situation opened gloriously before him. He saw Mrs. Meecham's harassed expression banished forever; he saw long processions of tourists turning in at her gate; he heard the clink of shillings dropping into her empty coffers. He made a wild clutch at his collection of moral scruples.

"But the—ethical side of it!" he objected feebly.

Wheeler turned on him a look of affluent scorn. Then he chuckled.

"Think of the widow, and of our might," he returned cajolingly. "We're not godly men yet, and we won't be till we're ordained next year. Meanwhile, we're just poor, weak, kind humans, liable to fall into unanalyzed good deeds. My fall comes here and now. I'm going to fall into Mrs. Meecham's beautiful Roman bath. The ethical side of it's up to us. She'll never know; but she'll tell who found it, and anyone who suspects or *knows* will blame us, not her. I don't believe anyone will ever tell her, though."

Stanton sparred for time.

"Haven't got to make the lady, too, have we?" he asked weakly. "And the fans and music?"

Wheeler frowned.

"All right," Stanton added briskly. "What's your plan? I'm in on it."

"Easiest thing ever. We'll ask Mrs. Meecham to let us excavate a bit; we'll put in most of the day pottering away here. Tonight, when everyone's asleep, we'll finish the job by moonlight. Show Mrs. Meecham our discovery in the morning. Knock her off her pins, won't it?"

It nearly knocked Stanton off his pins when he realized the extent of the deception to which he was committed, but he humbly accompanied his intrepid friend into the house and modestly made their request. Mrs. Meecham's brow clouded at the mention of "ruings," but she was willing to let these most agreeable lodgers amuse themselves in any way they chose, and she said so.

"You'd 'ave a better time on the river," she warned them gloomily. "Diggin' 'ere will do no good; it's a 'eartbreakin' job, that it is. Don't I know? A nice day on the river now, with a bit of lunch under the trees—"

Stanton faltered, but Wheeler caught him up with a sharp jab in the ribs, and the two fair flowers of a future ministry shouldered spades and went nobly out into the hot sun.

It cannot be said that they enjoyed the day. The work was harder than

they expected, and their difficulties were much complicated by the flattering interest of Mrs. Meecham and her sister, who appeared at unexpected moments to point out the dangers of sunstroke and the superior attractions of the river, as well as to discover that no "ruings" had yet come to light. They were not able to finish the task that night, nor even the next day, though they worked steadily and with the growing enthusiasm of artists who see perfection in the form of artistic disintegration with a Roman label blossoming under their hands. By the morning of the third day, however, the Roman "ruing" was dug up, and Wheeler, leaving Stanton gazing in awe at the result of their edifying depravity, went to tell Mrs. Meecham of their good fortune, his friend having definitely declined to add that black mark to his soul. Stanton contented himself with smiling sheepishly when the two women came and threatened to swoon with joy upon his neck.

"An' to think it's been 'ere all the time!" exclaimed Mrs. Meecham after the first raptures were over. "Right 'ere, under our very feet, an' us knowin' nothink about it! An' me that ungrateful—Dear, dear, 'twas enough to discourage the good Lord from letting me 'ave any ruings."

She stopped for breath, and her eyes fell on the flushed face of young Stanton. "An' to think we wouldn't 'ave ever found them if it 'adn't been for you!" she cried. Stanton hastened to rise to the only statement of the occasion to which he could commit himself.

"That's true," he said heartily. "I don't believe you would ever have found them if we hadn't come. So you must think of us sometimes, won't you, when we're home in America. And you must tell everybody that it was found

by two American tourists. We deserve that," he added fervently; "then we'll get the glory, or if there's—er—any mistake about it, we'll get the blame. Very few experts come to Cradelford," he concluded hopefully.

Mrs. Meecham surveyed him with adoring eyes and then turned their warm luster upon his friend. These lovable young men were poor, and they were to be ministers. Thus, in the general scheme of things, they were entailing a continued poverty on themselves. A desire to share her good fortune with them stirred in her motherly bosom. Also, she had unlimited visions of shillings, of wealth.

"Wouldn't it be honly right," she asked slowly and very solemnly, "if we shared the money—if I 'ad sixpence an' each of you 'ad threepence from every visitor? I could send you the money every quarter, if you'd let me 'ave your address."

But both young men were on their feet protesting against this. They were already paid, Mrs. Meecham gathered from their eager words, by the success of the excavation and their pleasure in her pleasure. Digging and discovery are the main delights of every excavator, not filthy lucre. They shook hands on this all around, and the feverish chuckle evoked from Stanton by the mental vision of threepence following him through life was drowned by Mrs. Meecham's loud and artless sigh of relief. Then the young men went slowly into the house to meet and grapple with the interrogations of an imperiously aroused conscience, while Mrs. Meecham, bathed in the glory of the morning sun, stood in her garden, her happy eyes seeing not only the Roman ruin before her, but herself framed by it and a rainbow encircling this happy allegory—a bow of promise, with a pot of gold at each of its feet.



WHERE obligations begin, friendship ends.

THE TEST

By FRED JACKSON

AS the butler noiselessly removed the final course and left the damask clear—save for the flowers and candles—an odd light kindled in Brandon's eyes, and he was conscious of a growing excitement. It required all his will power to keep his head clear and his hand from trembling. The moment had come at last! He had waited for it, through the interminable dinner, as a man on trial for murder must await the return of the jury—dreading the moment that might bring the death sentence—but *longing* for it, that the agonizing suspense might end.

Across the table from him Mrs. Brandon was listening to something young Harrow was telling her, her dark eyes fixed intently upon his, her lips slightly parted in a smile. Brandon winced as his eyes fell upon her, and the lines about his mouth tightened. Nothing that the boy was saying could have called such a look to her eyes—for he could hear every word of the senseless story distinctly; she was responding to something unspoken. Yesterday, intent selfishly upon his own concerns, the studies that absorbed him, he would have overlooked her expression and its significance, but since then the letter had fallen into his hands, and what had been written there had awakened him.

He tore his eyes from her forcibly, lest she catch sight of the suspicion that smoldered there, and then, involuntarily, looked again. The beauty of her was maddening. To think that he had taken for granted those last three years that it *must* belong to him—that he had won her irrevocably! His blind

egotism must have amused her. The thought sent the hot blood to his heart. Perhaps they had laughed together, these two, at his unquestioning faith. He clenched his fists beneath the cloth, his eyes burning over her through half-closed lids. And then, with a superhuman effort, he banished the madness and schooled his face to its accustomed calm.

As young Harrow's story came to an end, the butler arrived with coffee and liqueurs, and Mrs. Brandon leaned back with a faint sigh of regret. She shook her head as the servant extended his tray, and drawing a huge black-red Jaqueminot from the floral bank in the center of the table, she began to run her white fingers along the stem in a cautious search for thorns. The rose glowed blood red against the cloth—supplying the one touch of color about her. She was gowned simply in white—a soft, satiny white it was, that fell away from her shoulders, leaving them unadorned; but they were perfectly molded and warm white as polished ivory, so they required no adornment. Her arms, too, were bare, and she wore no jewels. Even her wedding ring was missing. Her dark, glossy hair was dressed low on her neck, and a tiny wreath of white silk roses crowned it—so that she was almost bridelike. Brandon, watching her, did not wonder that this boy had given her his first devotion. In his thirty-nine years he had seen many women—women of many countries and types—and he had never met another who could rival her.

Young Harrow helped himself to the nearest *demi-tasse*, accepted a tiny glass of cognac and a cigarette; Brandon, in

his turn, followed his guest's lead, and then with a nod he dismissed the butler, who went out, closing the door behind him. There were left in the room then only the three at the table—the three whose life threads had become so hopelessly entangled—Brandon and his wife and young Harrow. And only Brandon knew why they were there—and what was to be decided before they rose. He struck a match and offered it to the boy.

"Thank you," said Harrow, accepting it. Brandon lighted his own cigarette, rested his elbow lightly upon the cloth and faced them.

"I should like," he said, "to tell a story, too, please—if you will promise not to be very much bored. I'm not—well, a *raconteur*, by any means; but I think I can interest you, because my story is founded upon fact, and—it concerns you both, somewhat."

Mrs. Brandon raised her eyes with a sweet, puzzled look, and Harrow, flushing slightly, met Brandon's glance with a nod of encouragement. He was just twenty-four or twenty-five, this boy, with all the freshness of youth about him. Brandon, who was beginning to gray a bit at the temples, noted that and was troubled, for Mrs. Brandon was nearer Harrow's age than his. He realized that the odds were against him, but discouragement had always inspired him to fight. He went on with scarcely a pause.

"This morning," he said, "when my mail was handed me, I got a letter of my wife's—by some error of the servants'. My mail was lying upon the tray with the inscription side of the envelopes down, and I had opened this particular letter I mention before I knew that it was not intended for me. However, I read it through. That may strike you—at first glance—as a very dishonorable thing to do. Ordinarily it is, and I should never have been tempted to overstep the laws of strict good breeding but for a word that caught my eye as I was putting the letter aside. It was the third word in the first line of the letter. I wonder—if you could guess what it was?"

He stopped abruptly, facing young Harrow, but the boy was leaning forward breathlessly, his eyes wide with horror. Brandon, with a faint smile, glanced at his wife; her eyes met his wonderingly and a little anxiously, perhaps.

"It was—a word of four letters," said Brandon. "A little word, isn't it, to shatter a man's happiness and probably wreck three lives! The word was 'love.'"

Young Harrow drew in his breath convulsively through tight lips; Mrs. Brandon frowned, her wide eyes running from her husband's face to the boy's.

"In past generations," said Brandon gravely, "a man, upon finding that word written to his wife by another man, would have called out his rival—and would have attempted to settle the matter at the point of pistols. The idea was a fairly good one. Its intention was to award the woman in the case—to the better man. The flaw, however, was that the better man was not always the better shot—or the better hand with a sword. So frequently the woman fell to the share of—some one unworthy."

Both Harrow and Mrs. Brandon were staring at him now with frightened eyes. He went on in a low, perfectly controlled voice.

"Recently that manner of settling such affairs has fallen into disrepute. Duels are forbidden in this country. The husband in such cases has no redress—save that which he can win legally. He can sue the man for alienating his wife's affections; or he can avenge himself by refusing to grant his wife a divorce. But these are—very unsatisfactory settlements. Sometimes, you see, the woman is infatuated by a man who is not worthy of her—by some man incapable of guiding her future years. I suppose that chance is the only method of determining that."

He drew a letter from the pocket of his waistcoat and spread it out upon the table. Harrow turned white and wet his lips nervously.

"I am going to read you the letter I speak of," he said. "It is advisable that you understand the situation perfectly. Listen, please.

"Because I love you"—

"It begins without salutation, you see.

"Because I love you—that's the reason, if you must have it. I'm not accepting your invitation to go down to Tiptop with your party because I love you so desperately that I can't keep my senses when I see you—and I couldn't answer for anything that might occur if I went with you. If you throw this letter away without reading further, it will not matter about the rest—for I'm only going to tell you how much I love you—and that I can't help it. I used to have some ideas about honor. I can't think of them now. 'Thou shalt not covet' has lost its strength to control me. I forget that you belong to my 'neighbor'; I forget everything in God's world except that you are a woman—the most wonderful woman I have ever seen—more wonderful even than I have dreamed a woman could be—and that I *want* you—that life is death unless I have *you*—that every fiber of me is calling out for you. I suppose I am wronging Brandon in writing this—even in *feeling* it—but I'm not to blame. I can't *help* loving you. No one could. You're so sweet and innocent and genuine and true—and so *beautiful*—I can't *think* of you without feeling my heart beat—and beat—and beat. I can't get you out of my mind. When I'm not with you, I fret until I can see you again; when I'm with you, it takes my whole will to keep my heart from telling you. I have tried to *act* honorably, you see, even if I've not been able to *feel* honorably—but there was no use. I've known from the first that *some time* there must come a weak moment—that *some time* I must tell you. If you could only know how I've suffered; I've spent centuries in hell fighting it down, dear—but I can't *help* loving you—I love you in spite of myself. I should love you no matter what obstacle came between; I must go on loving you always—whether you give yourself to me or not.

"I don't know whether you love Brandon. I suppose that he loves you—in his own way—when he remembers that you exist; but he does not love you in *my* way. For God's sake, write me a line when you've read this—and face the future with me. If you love me—you'll come away with me and we'll share the rest of our lives—we'll wrest that much, at least, from the fates that are playing with us. If you can't love me, pity me, and send me away where I need never see you—but—I would rather die.

"With all the love my heart holds,

"For eternity yours,

"GORDON HARROW."

The boy across the table—the boy who had penned the lines—was breathing violently, his face aflame, his eyes fastened upon Mrs. Brandon's; she was staring at the little heap of blood red rose leaves that trickled through her white fingers upon the shining cloth, and her lashes were bright with tears. Brandon's eyes ran swiftly from one to the other of them.

"When I had read the letter," said Brandon quietly, "I realized that the counts against me were true ones. I have seemed to neglect you, Ruth—I suppose I have seemed to love you only when I remembered your existence. From Harrow's point of view—from the world's point of view, at least—it must have seemed so; but you know, I think, that I have given you all that a man has to give to a woman. Ruth—look at me, please."

She raised her eyes slowly; they were hidden by a mist of tears. Her white hands were clasped upon the table.

"You know, I think," he repeated, "that I have loved you—that I still love you—with all the sincerity and—with all the strength in me."

She nodded, the warm color creeping up under her white skin, but she could not speak. Harrow's arms were folded now, and his face was white and haunting with the agony stamped upon it.

"This boy," added Brandon gently, "loves you, too, I think—for there is in his letter a certain conviction—a certain compellingness. I want you to look into my eyes, Ruth, and tell me frankly if—in your heart—you have come to prefer him to me."

The woman neither raised her eyes nor replied, but sat motionless, her bosom stirring faintly beneath the soft satin folds. Brandon turned with a slight nod to the boy.

"I provided another method of settlement," he said, "in case my wife should refuse to choose. It is clear that the matter must be decided definitely at once. Neither of us, I am sure, could endure suspense."

Into Harrow's eyes leaped an eager light; Brandon's face seemed to age as he continued:

"I, perhaps, have a prior right to the woman whom we have both come to worship. But I waive that right. We are to try for her—both of us—upon an equal footing. If I cannot hold her, I deserve to lose her to you."

Mrs. Brandon raised her eyes swiftly, a startled light in them.

"You said in your letter that you would rather die than lose her," said Brandon. "I, too, would rather die than go through the rest of my life without her. In the coffee that stands before you—or in the coffee that stands before me—I have mixed the bacilli of the disease known as sleeping sickness. Whichever one of us drinks of that coffee—will contract the disease—and death will probably result. There is not yet a successful antidote for the poison, once it enters the system. It was to find such an antidote that I have been working with the germs."

Harrow and Mrs. Brandon were regarding Brandon with wide, terrified eyes. He smiled.

"One of us," he said, "will contract the disease and die. The one who is fortunate enough to select the other cup—wins the lady. We have each a fair chance. I swear upon my honor that I do not know into which cup I poured the germs."

"You're—mad!" cried Harrow, wetting his lips. His forehead was damp with perspiration; his hands shook with nervousness. "You're—*mad!*"

Brandon shook his head gravely.

"No," he said, "I'm quite sane. If you are not content to drink the coffee you yourself selected from the butler's tray—I will change with you—but drink one cup you must. I will drink the other."

"And—if I refuse?" cried Harrow grimly.

"Then," said Brandon, "I will deal with you as my ancestors would have dealt with one of your kind. By refusing you would show yourself unworthy of the equal chance I have offered you, and I would rather kill you than give my wife to a coward."

He drew a revolver suddenly and held it in one hand, where the light could fall upon it.

"Well?" he asked.

Harrow rose.

"In either case," he said, "it will be murder—but I accept your terms. You have sworn upon your honor that you do not know which cup holds the poison?"

Brandon nodded.

"Then," said Harrow, "I shall trust you—and I shall drink this."

He raised the cup he had with a steady hand to his lips, and Brandon raised his; but as he was about to set his lips to the brim, his wife leaped to her feet with a great cry and threw out her arms toward him.

"Don't!" she cried. "I love you—I love you!"

He stared straight into her eyes for an instant, set down the cup and caught her as she fell.

Harrow set down his empty cup. "Drink!" he said quietly.

Brandon shrugged and a faint smile crept into his eyes.

"It doesn't matter," he answered wearily. "There was nothing—in either cup. The matter adjusted itself, you see."

Young Harrow caught his breath, threw back his head and left the room, his blue eyes dark with agony; and Brandon threw himself upon his knees beside his wife.



THE fact that behind the clouds the sun still is shining never yet kept one drop of water off the shoulders of a man who was caught in a shower without an umbrella.

WHEN THE HALF-GODS GO

By VAN TASSEL SUTPHEN

"TODAY," announced Donna Olyphant, "is my birthday." Sybilla Kent hastily produced a netted gold purse from her chatelaine bag. "With my best love," she said smilingly.

"It sounded as though I were fishing, didn't it?" continued Miss Olyphant, and kissed her friend affectionately. "You always remember, Sybilla, and it's dear of you. But for the future, perhaps—do you know what particular birthday this is?"

The younger woman pleaded ignorance. "I've been trying to think," she said. "You came out before I did—was it seven or eight years?"

"I was born in 1879."

"And that subtracted from 1908—oh, I can't do sums in my head."

"Nine-and-twenty."

"Is it, really?"

"The critical period in a woman's life," went on Miss Olyphant meditatively. "I must now make a choice between continuing indefinitely at nine-and-twenty, and issuing my declaration of independence. For it is perfectly evident that I am now in my thirtieth year."

Sybilla Kent made a *moue*. "The ideal!" she exclaimed.

"Truth is truth," said Miss Olyphant philosophically, "and it is better to confront it. Moreover, this particular reality is not of necessity a terrible one. It was Balzac who made the *femme à trente ans* interesting, and our sex should be eternally grateful to him. In some ways it was a greater feat than the original one of creation."

"You have always been interesting," said Sybilla, with loyal conviction.

"That is only because people don't understand me. But I see their difficulty, and I share in it; I'm as much taken with the problem as any of my friends."

"You never will be serious," complained Miss Kent.

"Listen to me, Sybilla. In reality, I'm an entirely normal person, a perfectly ordinary, commonplace young woman—I suppose that I may still speak of myself as young—at least, in the comparative sense."

"I should hope so."

"Being normal, I want what other women want—yes, and generally get. Friends, pretty things, the *pas*."

"Well, you do have them."

"Precisely; but these are merely the externals. There is one ultimate desire in every woman's heart—love."

"Oh!" exclaimed Sybilla, and blushed pink.

"Yet here I am on the edge of the dead line and no man has asked me. You needn't look at me so protestingly, Sybilla Kent. There have been men who would have done so—I know that as well as you. But they didn't because I wouldn't allow it. Our sex has its methods of forestalling the unwelcome advance."

"You might have been married a dozen times, Donna."

"Truly, but that isn't what I wanted—marriage is only the shell that is supposed to contain a reality. Now, if love is the whole of a woman's existence—by the way, do you believe that, Sybilla?"

"Yes," answered Miss Kent somewhat hesitatingly. "Oh, I don't know. If it were really so, and I

should miss it! I wish you wouldn't talk that way."

"But I have to—it's my problem. Love is a necessity for me. And all my life long I have been striving and striving to realize it. That sounds fearfully unmaidenly, doesn't it?"

"Well, of course, if you said it in public—"

"Goose! But let me go on. I mean that I have always had the will to live, to believe, and to love. These are the essentials, without which one gets nothing. But suppose the right thing doesn't happen, and that same 'I will' continues to assert itself—what then?"

Miss Kent had nothing to say.

"It means that I am eternally trying to go toward some man, who doesn't or who can't respond; it means that I am always attracting other men, who have no real power to move me. It's the barrier behind and before."

"Suppose again that the right man comes along, and doesn't or won't see. All that a woman can do is to flutter about like a butterfly in the sun, hoping that some lucky chance—for instance, stubbing his toe—may cause him to look up. How humiliating! Or she must spread her spider's web, and wait until he accidentally steps into it. How degrading!"

Miss Kent looked a little scared; she still kept silence.

"I know that this is the natural order, so called," continued Miss Olyphant, "but it need not be the inevitable one. A woman's position in the world is very different from what it used to be. She now makes it for herself, just as a man does. According to the last census report women have secured a standing in almost every department of human activity. Law, medicine, theology, the arts—these as a matter of course. But there are also women cowboys, women steam engineers, even women stonemasons—think of that!"

"I don't like to think of it," answered Sybilla with unexpected spirit. Miss Olyphant smiled in superior fashion.

"'Facts,' as Mr. Gradgrind would say. 'Give me facts.' And there they are; you can't get away from them, my dear Sybilla."

"What are you going to do, Donna?"

"Simply keep step with progress. If a woman of thirty can wear diamonds and dispense with chaperons, why should she not employ her new-found liberty to some real purpose? If her happiness comes in sight, she should have the right to secure it, even if she has to take the initiative."

"Would you ask a man to marry you, Donna Olyphant!"

"You needn't put it so crudely, Sybilla. I certainly shouldn't lose the chance because I hesitated to go after it. The truth is that we women are afraid, not of the thing itself, but of the conventions that hedge it about. The traditions are in our blood, and we are too cowardly or too lazy to combat them; the world has moved, but we continue to live in medieval twilight. I, for one, propose to walk into the sunlight and live my own life."

"I couldn't—I couldn't," murmured Miss Kent helplessly.

"You don't have to, my dear child. You are the standard article in femininity, as staple as sugar or wheat. You never heard of a barrel of flour getting shopworn, did you? But with alligator pears it is different. Particularly the alligator pear *à trente ans*."

"Twenty-nine, Donna."

"Thirty, I said. But be tranquil, my Sybilla. I am not going to stand on the corner and ring a dinner bell; I shall not advertise 'object matrimony.'"

"I heard that you had taken a box at the Opera in your own name."

"That is true. I am also having some new gowns made—among them one of cherry-colored velvet."

"Donna!"

"Will you come and see it?"

Sybilla hesitated; then she went.

The Stantons had sent out cards for a leap year dance on Twelfth Night. "A favorable opportunity for hoisting my 'owner's flag,'" reflected Miss

Olyphant. "At leap year parties it is considered proper and amusing to temporarily subvert the relations of sex, and I shall simply keep on with the joke." All very true, but if Miss Olyphant had been perfectly candid with herself she would have owned up to a certain hesitancy in taking that first step toward emancipation. It is always easier to go with the crowd. "But once the plunge is made I'll keep on swimming," she told herself.

Of course the women invited their partners for the affair, and Miss Olyphant, after careful deliberation, pitched upon Alfred Post. There could be no significance in the choice, for Mr. Post was a confirmed bachelor, an admirable exponent of the art of dancing, and—oh, well just Alfred Post and therefore the common property of all well connected damsels from time immemorial. Her note elicited a prompt acceptance, whereupon Donna ordered Mr. Post's *boutonnière* from a fashionable florist, and hurried up the final fittings of the cherry-colored costume.

The leap year party was on, but Miss Olyphant, looking regal in velvet and diamonds, took no part in the preliminary and informal dancing; like a wise general, she was studying her field and mapping out her lines of attack. It amused her to observe that the men did not enter over heartily into the spirit of the occasion; it is always difficult to play waiting parts gracefully when one has been used to holding the center of the stage. For instance, there was Arthur Wilde, the hero of a hundred midnight routs, the very mirror of carpet chivalry. He had sat out the last half dozen numbers, and he was looking undeniably sulky. Was there a conspiracy against his social dictatorship that the pert young buds passed him coldly by, that even the elder blossoms had no largess to bestow? Miss Olyphant could not resist the temptation to lean over and inquire sweetly: "How do you like it, Arthur?" And then, when Mr. Wilde vouchsafed no reply: "I don't mind giving you this turn myself."

"Thanks," returned the neglected gentleman crossly, "but the floor's abominably rough, and I think I'll wait until after supper. Besides, our steps are so different; we never did succeed in hitting it off."

"Here's gratitude for you," reflected Miss Olyphant indignantly. "No woman in his position would have dared to be so rude. Yes, and why not?" An uneasy conviction of the truth oppressed her. "I suppose it's because he is a man," she concluded. "A leap year party may be a fact, but it is not the ultimate one, and he knows it." Entirely logical the deduction, but Miss Olyphant did not propose to accept it. "After all, I am the woman of thirty," she told herself defiantly.

Now, of course there was a real man in Miss Olyphant's experiment, and he had been there all along. The normal feminine mind never formulates purely abstract theories; there must always be the concrete problem to resolve, and so we come at last to Mr. Lynde Garrison, sitting modestly behind an artificial palm at the far end of the room and incidentally within easy arm's-length of Sybilla Kent. Miss Olyphant continued to regard him with thoughtful attention; he had always interested her more or less. And now—

Supper was over, and the first favor figure of the cotillion was in progress. Miss Olyphant marched straight across the room, and bestowed the pretty trifle upon Mr. Garrison, who received it with becoming gratitude. But just as they were about to swing into the two-step he hung back unaccountably. "I know it's leap year," he said with a flush, "but don't you think it would be easier dancing er—the other way." It was only then that Miss Olyphant realized what she was doing; she had assumed the masculine position for the round dance, and Mr. Garrison was visibly embarrassed.

"I've been teaching a class of girls at the Settlement House," explained Donna hastily. "Taking the man's part of course, and one gets so into the habit. Yes, the other way would be better."

Such a stupid thing to do, and Mr. Garrison's shyness was proverbial; to Donna indeed it had been one of his attractive characteristics. "However, a man is accustomed to ignore similar contretemps," philosophized Miss Olyphant, "and I will do likewise." Whereupon she repeated the compliment of a favor three times in succession and was somewhat surprised to observe that the gentleman's self-consciousness seemed to deepen with each renewed attention. "I wonder if he isn't a little bit dull?" she asked herself. But, a moment later, she dismissed the reflection as manifestly unfair.

Somehow Donna did not enjoy the evening as she had hoped to do. She liked dancing for its own sake, and it must be acknowledged that Mr. Garrison was an execrable performer in that line. The men upon whom she could depend ordinarily to call her out seemed curiously remiss in their attentions—possibly they were awed by the cherry colored velvet—and Alfred Post's infinitesimal chatter wearied her excessively. Then Arthur Wilde, happening to pass, took advantage of her evident boredom to make an unworthy reprisal. "Left at the Post, eh, Donna?" he whispered, and smiled disagreeably. Worst of all, Mr. Garrison had made no effort to reciprocate the benefits bestowed upon him, and he had had four distinct opportunities to do so. Yes, and he had danced twice with Sybilla Kent. Miss Olyphant felt annoyed at the meager results of this her initial independent campaign; she was obliged to summon philosophy to her aid. "One should expect these little obstacles," she told herself, with an heroic attempt to grasp the masculine point of view in its entirety. "It's part of the game and the best part too."

During the next few weeks Donna set herself to make an unprejudiced estimate of Mr. Garrison—his character, attainments, and potential qualifications for that new station in life into which it might please Miss Olyphant to call him. To her very real satisfaction Mr. Garrison shaped up nobly

to the plans and specifications that she had prepared. It is true that Donna's ideal of masculine stage presence called for a tall, blond figure of a man, while Mr. Garrison was dark and somewhat undersized, but she finally found herself willing to waive this purely physical shortcoming. "At least," she mused, "he possesses the noble serenity of expression that one associates with broad shouldered, yellow haired men. He belongs to the viking type in all but the outward characteristics—surely the least important. And that is all I want."

Yes, Miss Olyphant had decided that Mr. Garrison would do. She had always liked him—which of course is requisite, and he interested her—equally indispensable when it is a question of a partnership for life. Mr. Garrison's conversation stimulated Donna; his point of view was unflinchingly attractive to her intelligence; he had only to come into the room to make her sit up, both figuratively and actually. Finally, in the minor details of life, there would be but little to change on either side. She might have to give up bridge, which evidently bored him, and he would have to accept her taste in the matter of his colored ties. All this would work itself out in due time; the really important question was whether she wanted Lynde Garrison. Assuming that she did, was it not her business to go straight out and get him? Miss Olyphant took her pen, and wrote quickly:

"I am asking Sybilla Kent, Alfred Post, and the Jack Moretons to dine with me at my new apartments (10 Harrison Square, West) on Wednesday night at eight. Will you also come, and help make my little housewarming a success? Please do; you are spending far too much of your time in that dingy laboratory, and I therefore adopt the procedure for summoning jury talesmen—no excuses of a business nature will be accepted."

Wednesday night came, and with it the invited guests. "Nice little box you've got here, Donna," said Mr. Post approvingly, as he glanced about

the really charming rooms. "Being a bachelor myself I rather think I understand the art of making myself comfortable."

"I can never hope to attain your lofty standard, my dear Alfred," returned Miss Olyphant sweetly. "Perhaps unfortunately I still retain some consideration for other people."

"And so you remembered my weakness for spaghetti Milannais," continued Mr. Post quite unabashed. "I think I *will* have a little more."

"It's a perfect love of an apartment," pronounced Sybilla. "But didn't your brother object to your setting up for yourself?"

"Charles was really very nice about it. He argued and pled, just as all properly conducted married brothers are supposed to do. But sister-in-law Anne was not so difficult to convince, and Charles, having performed his duty, gave in gracefully. I think that the cherry colored velvet had a good deal to do with it; he realized that no flesh and blood chaperone could possibly command a tithe of the respect accorded to *that*. Mrs. Jack is present now merely in the light of corroborative evidence, and out of deference to Sybilla's extreme youth."

"Did you hear that, Mr. Moreton?" demanded Mrs. Jack in simulated indignation. "I had a suspicion all along that we were only invited to fill up."

"Well, and aren't we doing it?" returned Mr. Jack placidly. "I know that I never get such mutton at home. Besides the game is still to come, and I have a notion that we are going to have canvas-back, eh, Garrison?"

Mr. Garrison, who was occupying the seat perilous at Miss Olyphant's right, looked up in alarm at hearing his name. He was uneasily conscious that he had not exchanged two words with his hostess since dinner began, and he was wondering how he ought to start in. Somehow he found it difficult to talk with Miss Olyphant—it had been so ever since the night of that ridiculous leap year dance. And yet he had seen her more frequently in the last

month than in the whole four years of their previous acquaintance.

"I beg your pardon," began Mr. Garrison—but at that moment the appalling thing happened. Mr. Post, in reaching for the salted almonds, managed to overturn a candle, and the flame came into contact with Sybilla's chiffon sleeve. Following the inevitable impulse, the girl sprang to her feet, and made for the door leading into the drawing-room. But Garrison, coat in hand, was waiting there; he held the garment firmly about her, beating at every stray spark. Now it was all over.

"Not the least in the world," declared Sybilla. "I don't feel a thing." But, after the excitement had measurably subsided, she admitted the existence of a pretty severe burn on one arm, together with minor injuries, and was forthwith carried off to Donna's bedroom for more intimate ministrations. The Moreton carriage had been summoned by telephone, and Mrs. Jack would take her home at once.

"She's all right now," announced Miss Olyphant, returning for an instant to the dining room. "So there's no reason why you men shouldn't have what's left of the dinner. Jane will be back in a moment to serve it. You see it *is* canvas-back, and that makes a difference, doesn't it, Alfred?"

Mr. Post laid down his cigarette, with a patient air of martyrdom. "I suppose you think that I oughtn't to eat any," he began, but Miss Olyphant, hastening back to the bedside of the sufferer, did not condescend to reply.

"It's just as well," continued the author of the catastrophe. "Cook must have lost her head during the excitement, for the noble bird is done to death, a gastronomic murder." Mr. Post laid down his knife and fork with a sigh, and turned to Garrison. "My boy," he said handsomely, "you are a hero, and we are all infinitely obliged to you. The right thing at the right moment. But how you got around the table as you did beats me."

Garrison blushed and stammered.

"I—I don't know," he said. "We needn't talk about it any more."

"A question of temperament," insisted Mr. Post. "The subconscious faculty working independently of the will, and thereby accomplishing results that would be impossible to the objective mind. Mr. Garrison's action, splendid as it was, remains a purely subliminal process; he happened to be tuned to the psychological issue. Just so in any other conceivable emergency. For instance, imagine the ceiling opening, and the family dinner of the apartment upstairs suddenly deposited in our laps. Say that it was a cut of corned beef. The rest of us could only have sat, and stared at it; Garrison would instantly have passed the mustard. Do I make myself quite clear?"

The return of Mrs. Jack to the dining room, in quest of a fortifying cup of coffee, cut short this psychological discussion. "Sybilla is doing splendidly," she announced. "By the way, Jack, you might see if the carriage is here." She turned to Mr. Garrison. "We owe it all to you," she gushed. "Your wonderful courage and marvelous presence of mind!" "Absence of mind," put in Mr. Post parenthetically, but Mrs. Jack rippled on unheeding. "Sybilla thanks you, Mr. Garrison. You have laid her under a perfectly tremendous obligation, one that no woman could ever forget, or ever adequately repay." Garrison bowed; would this twaddle never cease?

"Carriage!" announced Moreton, at the door, and Mrs. Jack hurried off. "No, we don't need any assistance," she called back.

The sounds of departure died away, and Miss Olyphant appeared, inviting her two remaining guests to join her in the drawing-room. "You can bring your cigars," she graciously vouchsafed.

Mr. Post, at heart the kindest of men and really much upset by the events of the evening, pleaded a club engagement, and took himself off. Somewhat to Donna's surprise Mr. Garrison elected to remain; he sat down determinedly in the one straight backed chair that the room afforded, and

began to smoke in little nervous puffs.

"I am glad you waited," said Miss Olyphant heartily. "Sybilla is my very dearest—why are you holding your cigar in your left hand?"

Mr. Garrison rose hastily; he tried to trump up some washable excuse for an immediate leavetaking. But Donna would not have it. "Let me see the hand you are keeping behind your back," she persisted. "Ah, I thought so! Jane, bring me the sweet oil, and plenty of cotton-batting and bandages."

Garrison's right hand had been rather badly scorched in the crushing out of the fire, and Miss Olyphant bound it up in neat, surgical fashion. "I once took a 'First Aid to the Injured' course," she explained. "There, that ought to do," she concluded, surveying her work with a critical eye. The patient looked so slight and boyish as he sat there; moreover, he was suffering, and she had been ministering to his necessities: with an impulse that was purely maternal, Donna leaned forward, and patted Garrison gently on the shoulder. He shrank away from the touch, and this secretly amused her; she repeated the experiment, and again he winced. What a delightful boy he was!

Mr. Garrison drew a long breath, and straightened up. "There is something I wanted to say to you," he began.

"He can't be going to propose!" thought Miss Olyphant, in very real perturbation. "We're not nearly ready for that, and it's not his business anyway." She lifted a warning hand, but Mr. Garrison, having taken the bit in his teeth, was plunging ahead regardless, and Donna had to listen.

"It's about the small service that I was fortunate enough to render to Miss Kent," he was saying. "Mrs. Moreton seemed to imply that I had put her under a perfectly tremendous obligation, even one that might prove embarrassing. I shouldn't like to think that."

"You mustn't," returned Miss Olyphant promptly. "Of course she is grateful, and always will be; you did

save her life. But nothing more is implied, or need ever be expressed."

"You really think so?"

"I know it," asseverated Miss Olyphant with due solemnity. But when he was finally gone, she permitted herself the luxury of a quiet smile. "What a deliciously candid and unworldly nature!" she mused. "He was evidently thinking of the old-fashioned type of romance, in which the hero invariably pays two prices for his gallantry, a double disposition of his life in the service of the distressed damsel. I actually believe that he is afraid of Sybilla. It was almost the same as asking for my protection." A warm wave of color swept over Donna's face; assuredly the situation had arrived, and she must determine at once how to meet it.

Sybilla Kent—surely she was the negligible quantity. There was no reason in the world for suspecting that she could be seriously interested in Mr. Garrison, for all that he had been good enough to save her life. But Sybilla was romantic, and it is in the very nature of these soft, fluffy women to create trouble. It was plain that Lynde Garrison, high-minded and chivalric gentleman that he was, recognized the contingency, and feared it. And he had made an appeal, one that must be considered.

Miss Olyphant set herself to review Mr. Garrison's position with rigorous impartiality. Unquestionably it was a delicate one. She, Donna Olyphant, was a very rich woman, and he a positively poor man. He could never endure the imputation of fortune hunting; the mere weight of her millions must act inevitably as a seal upon his lips. More than that Miss Olyphant had good reason for thinking that her dominant personality (even apart from the cherry colored velvet) could not but have a deterrent effect upon so guileless a nature. "I can't imagine Lynde Garrison asking me to marry him," she said half aloud. Unconsciously a tender smile curved her firm upper lip. "It seems that the mountain must come to Mahomet," she con-

cluded. She went to her writing desk and picked up her pen.

It was not an easy letter to write, for all that Miss Olyphant was so settled in her own mind, and so unalterably convinced of the essential justice of her cause. But at last it was finished, and copied in a fair hand for use—never an interlineation, postscript, or cross, a letter of which any man might be proud. It was plain, straightforward and withal profoundly feminine—even a princess condescending to a commoner is entitled to the luxury of her reservations, and Donna Olyphant was too truly the woman not to be jealous of all her sex's prerogatives. Enough that the letter made it possible for Lynde Garrison to speak; it did not compel him to do so. With a steady step, Miss Olyphant proceeded to the mail chute, and dropped the missive into its fateful aperture. A moment later she regretted the action—a last, lingering expression of natural weakness, and one that she promptly repressed.

Early the following morning Donna went to inquire after the fair sufferer. She found Sybilla in bed, with the doleful prospect before her of a fortnight's stay therein. But, under the spell of Donna's warm-hearted sympathy, Miss Kent recovered a modicum of her spirits. Everybody had been so attentive, and Mr. Garrison had called at an unearthly early hour, leaving flowers and such a kind inquiry. "Very proper of him," assented Miss Olyphant heartily.

Once introduced, the subject of Mr. Garrison proved a fruitful one, and Miss Olyphant was drawn on to disclose to her friend some of the deductions at which she had arrived—intoxicated with the psychological subtleties of the problem, she had almost forgotten that it was one of her own devising; twice she checked herself upon the brink of absolute frankness. And then, to her utter amazement, Sybilla, the soft and fluffy one, burst forth with a vehemence nothing less than startling.

"It's shameful of you, Donna,"

began Miss Kent, in a voice that shook. "You're worse than the vivisection people, for they only cut up rabbits and guinea pigs, while you put a pin through a man's soul in order to see it dilate and change color. If you cared it would be one thing, but you don't; you're just amusing yourself with your theories, and I think it's horrid of you." Really an awe inspiring exhibition of righteous indignation, and followed, in due course, by tears, eau-de-cologne, pocket handkerchiefs, and the usual incoherencies of explanation and caress attendant upon the feminine process of "making up."

Miss Olyphant walked away from this painful interview in a chastened mood. "Yet it is just what a man in my position would be doing," she told herself defiantly. Then an illuminating explanation of the fluffy one's conduct flashed across her mind. "Why, Sybilla is in love with him!" cried Donna, and wondered that she had been so blind. "Perhaps it was my consciously assumed masculine attitude that deceived me," she concluded.

Well, and what now—still from the male standpoint? "Of course a man takes what he wants," reflected Miss Olyphant. "Besides, we women are not supposed to be capable of sex loyalty; it couldn't be expected." Then the vision of Sybilla's pretty, tear stained face rose before, and Donna's heart was melted. "She shall have him!" she declared heroically. A glow of accomplished altruism possessed her wholly, until she happened to think of the letter, that fateful, fatal letter. Miss Olyphant had to look around sharply to convince herself that she had not literally stepped off into some three feet of exceedingly frigid water.

According to all the canons Mr. Garrison should have waited upon Miss Olyphant that very afternoon, and at the earliest possible hour. But he did not come, and Donna at last realized that some marvelous chance had given her a temporary respite. Then, during the evening, Alfred Post dropped in, and casually imparted the infor-

mation that Mr. Garrison had taken an early morning train for the South—a two weeks' business trip. Miss Olyphant went a little giddy, and Mr. Post took it upon himself to give her some big brotherly advice about social dissipations and late hours. "Not at our time of life, my dear girl," he concluded gravely.

During the next fortnight Miss Olyphant existed rather than lived. She heard nothing from Mr. Garrison, and the obvious inference was that his mail was not being forwarded to him. Yet the bombshell was in position, and, even with a fuse of exceptional length, the spark must sooner or later reach the powder. If there were only some way, outside of the crude methods of bribery or burglary, of reclaiming the incriminating document! "Why don't they teach the use of the jimmy at the finishing schools?" thought Miss Olyphant resentfully.

The two weeks, plus a day, had passed. Sybilla Kent was convalescent, and was looking interestingly pretty in her new tea gowns. And then, on her way home, Donna caught a glimpse of Garrison, sitting in a Pennsylvania cab, and surrounded by suit cases and umbrellas. He had returned; in half an hour he would know all.

The courage of the finally condemned and about to be executed criminal is proverbial. Miss Olyphant rang up the "Abbotsford," and requested speech with Mr. Garrison. He responded promptly.

"Can you call on me this afternoon?" asked Miss Olyphant, without preliminary skirmishing. "Any time—after you have read your mail, I mean." There was that in Mr. Garrison's voice which breathed reluctance, but he could do nothing else than assent—politely. Miss Olyphant rang off, and had recourse to the mild stimulant of three drops of cologne on a lump of sugar.

Miss Olyphant entered the drawing-room. As in a mist she saw Mr. Garrison's sleek, black head outlined against the yellow window curtains. Some conventional words were on her

lips, and she was wondering if she would be able to force them into utterance, when the diversion arrived—the entrance of the parlor maid. In her hand she carried a silver tray, and on the tray reposed a letter. "It is addressed to the gentleman who is calling," explained the girl in a low tone. "Had I better give it to him, m'm?"

With a firm hand Miss Olyphant arrested her overzealous servitor, and reclaimed the wandering missive. It bore Lynde Garrison's correct name and address except for one amazing discrepancy. Instead of New York Miss Olyphant had plainly and deliberately written Philadelphia, and the letter remaining undelivered had now been returned by the Dead Letter office to its original sender. But why Philadelphia instead of New York? Ah, that is a mystery which no mortal intelligence will ever penetrate.

Miss Olyphant enjoyed the supreme felicity of tearing the cause of so much disquietude into countless bits, while she continued to exchange polite mutual inquiries with Mr. Garrison. And then:

"Have you seen Sybilla?"

"I left a card this morning," answered Mr. Garrison, blushing.

"That is not enough," pronounced the lady authoritatively. "My motor will be here in a few minutes, and I will take you with me."

At Miss Kent's house Donna, glancing at an upstairs window, caught a glimpse of Sybilla's face looking rather drawn and white. Donna smiled, and waved her hand.

"I may not get in," hesitated Mr. Garrison, as he alighted. His face, too, was white.

"Oh, yes, you will," returned Miss Olyphant with superb confidence. "However, I'll wait a minute or two and make sure."

There was an appreciable delay in the opening of the door, quite long enough for the transmission of a message from the upper regions. Its purport must have been favorable, for Mr. Garrison stepped lightly within the portal, without even a backward glance for the benevolent *dea ex machina*.

"So the great experiment has come to this," reflected Miss Olyphant. "I don't even feel the approving sense of self-sacrifice. Sybilla really wanted him, and I really didn't. All a mistake, and I am only too thankful that it wasn't a worse one."

And yet, as she sat before her lonely spinster hearth that night, Donna's spirits were unaccountably low. "It seems that I must go hungry all my days," she told herself. "Even if I could find a second Lynde Garrison I doubt if I would care to renew the chase. A man doesn't know enough about the game to keep up the interest. He won't pretend to run away, and when cornered he won't fight; it's like hitting a feather pillow. The only thing left for me is to become the woman of thirty in the full sense of the word, with one eye out for the second joint of the chicken, and the other fixed on the corner seat at the fireside. Either that or acquire my title of 'missus' by an act of out and out piracy—say that I carried off Alfred Post, and married him at the point of my hat pin. I think I prefer the former alternative."

For that particular Monday night at the Opera Miss Olyphant had sent an extra ticket to Alfred Post. "Bring with you some nice man, who will fit in," she wrote.

The curtain before the anteroom was drawn aside, and Mr. Post and his friend presented themselves. Donna heard the vague accents of an unfamiliar name, and the next moment she was looking into the eyes of a perfect and absolute stranger, horribly conscious of flaming cheeks and trembling hands, waiting, hoping, fearing—what was it that he was saying?

"It is very good of you, Miss Olyphant. Am I to sit here?" The curtain began to rise.

"I thought he was going to ask me to marry him," reflected Miss Olyphant, with an unwonted simplicity.

Strangely enough it was not until six months later that the engagement of Donna Olyphant to Commander

Craig of the Navy was announced. And yet the lover had been no laggard in his wooing; even now he was inclined to grumble upon the unexampled length of his probation. "Never was any woman so tantalizingly elusive, illogical, unreasonable!" he declared.

"Now why? You knew from the first that we belonged."

"Yes, but you didn't," retorted Miss Olyphant. "And a man must believe that he has created a situation before a woman can presume to handle it."



SLEEP AND NIGHT

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

OH, Sleep and Night—all day the thought of you
Has been like shade in fierce, midsummer noon,
Falling across men's weariness as dew
Falls upon fevered fields, whose only boon
Comes in the hands of twilight and the moon.

In dust and heat and clamor—weak and strong,
We serve the noisy gods of street and mart,
Plodding the path of day that overlong
Leads to that silent goal, where, each apart,
You draw us to the healing of your heart.

Come, as of old on crimson battle grounds
Those tender women came—low-voiced and white—
To bend with love and pity o'er men's wounds;
Even to us, sore wounded in day's fight,
Come that we still may live—oh, Sleep and Night.



SEA MOODS

By EMMA PLAYTER SEABURY

GLEAMING levels of blue, dimpled with lilies of foam,
Seaweed flowers adrift on waves that wimple and run;
The violet island's crest is pearl with an opal dome,
And the day is swinging its censor of gold at the diamond shrines
of the sun.

THE WEAK BROTHER

By GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

DAMON could hardly wait until the ladies had left the dining room to ask what we thought of Madame Adoni.

"She claims to be French," he said. "Is she? Isn't she rather more Italian? And less Italian than Spanish? And mightn't she be Russian?"

"What I want to know," said young Copely, "is this: *Is* she beautiful?"

"Is she tall?" I ventured.

"That's it," said Damon; "is she?"

"Is she an angel," asked Garrison, "or a devil?"

"Is she natural all the time," asked Damon, "or does she act all the time?"

And forthwith we all agreed that we were blessed if any of these questions could be satisfactorily answered.

"And, by the way," said young Copely, "is she married?"

"That I can tell you," said Damon; "she is not. She told me so herself. So go in my boy and win."

"Thanks," said Copely calmly; "I believe I will."

At this moment Copely was called to the telephone. He was gone a long time, and when he returned there was a set look of gravity upon his ordinarily gay brown face.

"No bad news, I hope," said Damon, with his eager sympathy for all the world.

"I hope not," said Copely. "It was a woman I know, to ask me if I know anything about her husband. He's been acting queerly, it seems, for a year or more, ever since he got back from Mexico; and she says that he walked out of the house day before yesterday, and she's had no word of

him all that time, poor little soul, and she's in a terrible state of mind—"

"God bless me!" said Damon. "What's the matter with him—drugs, drink—or some other 'poor little soul'?"

"None of these," said Copely. "It's a reason that you'd never guess if you didn't happen to know. It's conscience. It's made him queer all round; but this disappearing for two days is the limit. Why, I give you my word, that poor little woman's voice sounded like that of a crazy person; and of course I couldn't help her. I don't know where the man is, damn him! He's a good friend of mine, too."

Just here the butler returned from carrying the coffee to the ladies on the terrace.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said to Damon; "Madame Adoni has asked me to have some cigarettes sent out to her chauffeur."

"Certainly," said Damon, "of course;" and he gathered a generous handful of cigarettes from a box on the table. "Take him those, and if he should happen to be without money or champagne, let me know."

Garrison snickered.

"Well, your question is answered anyway, Garrison," said Damon. "The woman who keeps her servants supplied with cigarettes is *not* a devil."

"Not exactly," said Garrison; "merely an enemy of society."

A little later we joined the ladies on the terrace. We found them in that silence which follows a good song well sung or a good story well told. Madame Adoni sat in a deep chair with her back to a lovely view of moonlit

rye fields and distant apple orchards. In her simple white dress she looked, or had chosen to look, wonderfully young, naïve and pure.

"We have been talking of fear," she said in that pure golden, Bernhardtian tone of voice that in less than a year had set two continents by the ears, you might say.

"But none of these ladies has ever been really frightened. They lay claim to ordinary hair risings, and cold shivers up and down the backbone—but a real fright they have none of them known."

"But you?" said Damon.

"Yes," she said, "once. I was once driven forty miles in an automobile by a chauffeur who, for the first twenty miles at least, was crazy with drink. At no time did we have all four wheels on the ground at the same time, and when I screamed 'You will kill us!' he laughed like a maniac and gave the motor more gas; it was very horrid."

"And what happened finally?" I asked.

She flung me a wonderful smile.

"Would you believe it?" she said. "The excitement and my screams sobered him; and finally he became such a mess of penitence and lost nerve that I had to keep urging him to run a little faster—when he got sober he wanted to crawl!"

"When did this dreadful thing happen, Madame Adoni?" asked Damon. "And what did you do to the man afterward?"

"I'm still debating what I must do to him," she said quietly. "It happened tonight on my way out from town."

"What!" exclaimed Damon. "You don't mean to tell me that that man is actually at this moment in my stable, smoking my cigarettes and enjoying the privilege of being alive?"

"Oh," said Madame Adoni, "I feel sure that it will never happen again. He is now so sober, so penitent—I am not in the least afraid of him."

"I am," said Damon firmly; "and just as soon as I finish my cigar I am going down to the stable to shoot him."

"Don't," said Madame Adoni, smiling. "The experience is money in my pocket. I now *know* things about fear that I had formerly to guess. But you shall judge next winter. You shall see me in the wonderful new Polish play. It is called 'Fear!'"

Copely, still looking grave, had seated himself on the wall of the terrace close to Madame Adoni's chair. He leaned suddenly toward her.

"I don't believe you were frightened," he said, "not really frightened. I've been *studying* your face," he went on. "I *hope* you don't mind; but it hasn't the *look* of a person that has been frightened. A person that has been *really* frightened never quite loses the look. I'm just as sure as that."

Madame Adoni turned a face of serene innocence to him. "Are you a face palmist, so to speak?" she asked. "Does the face bear marks of all its owner's experiences? Dear me, I hope not!"

"I believe that it does," said Copely earnestly. "But it wouldn't be like print in an open book. It wouldn't be precise. For instance, you might be sure that a certain person had known fear, but you couldn't tell what had done the frightening."

Madame Adoni appealed laughingly to her host.

"Won't you take this young gentleman away," she said, "and lock him up? He sees things in my face and I'm afraid he'll tell them. And the dreadful part of it is that they are all true."

"I won't say a word," said Copely, "I won't even tell these people that you've got the most wonderful face in the world—I see that it's been told so before—because they know it without being told. And now I'll be mum as a mouse and listen to my betters."

"After that promise," said Damon, "we shall insist upon your talking steadily for the next hour."

"He shall tell about fear," said Madame Adoni.

"'Fears I have met,'" announced Damon, "by Walter Copely. A monologue with imitations."

"He jests at fears who never saw a fright," Garrison ventured timidly.

"Just because," said Copely, somewhat nettled, "you people have all met cows in fields and thought they were bulls and run for your lives, you think you know all about fear. But you don't. Every emotion you have is a shoddy vaudeville imitation. Me, too, of course. I've never been more than conventionally frightened, either. But I know a man who was really afraid. And he told me about it. It wasn't at ghosts or anything uncanny. He was simply afraid of being shot. He wasn't afraid in the abstract, you understand, but in the concrete. If he did so and so he wouldn't be shot; if he didn't do so and so he would. What he was requested to do at the point of the gun was mortally and legally wrong, and he was afraid to do it; but after he had thought it over he found that he was more afraid of being shot. He's the man I was talking to you men about just now."

"The man that disappeared two days ago?" asked Damon.

"Yes," said Copely, "the man whose conscience troubles him."

"A man with a conscience?" said the girl from Hawaau.

"Not a good conscience," said Copely. "He would sell it very cheap to anybody who was looking for one."

"I don't want Mr. Copely to be interrupted again," said Madame Adoni. "That scarf, Damon—it's on the back of your chair. Thanks."

With an extraordinary deftness she drew the scarf about her firm white shoulders, and turned a little so that her wide, innocent eyes rested on Copely's face.

"Tell me," she said, with ever so slight yet potently compelling an accent on the "me," "about the man who was afraid of being shot, who disappeared two days ago, because of a bad conscience. He sounds something of a document, I think."

Copely addressed himself directly to Madame Adoni.

"Were you ever in Mexico?" he asked.

"No," she answered quietly. "Why?"

"No reason," he said, "except that I was wondering where you learned to put on a scarf as the Mexican women do. And then this man who was afraid—well, it happened to him in Mexico. But I can't keep saying 'this man'—I'll call him O'Connor."

I did not see Madame Adoni shift her scarf, but it seemed now to lie quite differently upon her shoulders, with a something of primness and a loss of complete grace.

"When O'Connor went to Mexico," said Copely, "he had been married about a year to the girl he had always been in love with. He was an exchange trader, a very clever one, but the game was against him, and he was reduced temporarily from a big income to a very small one. There was quite an assortment of mining properties, mostly in Mexico, that were part of his father's estate, and he made up his mind to have a look at them. A mining engineer started with him."

"You?" asked Damon.

"Yes," said Copely; "and I came down with appendicitis on the way, and he went on alone. When he came back I was still in the hospital, in Baltimore, and he came on from New York to tell me about the mines and other things. It so happened that year that I was bloatedly rich, and had a room to myself in the hospital, so that O'Connor had a first rate opportunity to talk without being overheard. He began by telling me that it was the first chance he'd had to talk to anybody but his wife, and that he wanted to talk about something that, God help him, he couldn't talk about to her."

"Do they let you smoke?" he asked. Then he brought a chair close to my bed and lighted a cigar. But I noticed that he didn't lean back in the chair and loaf the way he usually did off the exchange, or smoke his cigar coolly and comfortably. Instead, he sat on the edge of the chair, and mangled the butt of the cigar with his teeth, and made it hot and unpleasant smelling with quick puffs.

"'Walter,' he said, 'I've got to tell you what I am up against. It's dirty and low, and I'm a skunk. But if ever you had any friendship for me, you'll give me your sympathy now, and you'll help me to think out what I should do!'"

"He looked as if he hadn't slept well for a long time, and his face, that usually had a complexion like an infant's, looked dry and blotchy.

"'The first mine I visited,' he said, 'was the one at Acapulco. It used to be worked you know, but isn't any more, and the country about is turned agricultural—wheat and fiber. It's held in big tracts—one family cultivates nearly two hundred thousand acres; and the man I stopped with had fifty thousand acres fenced in, and God knows how much grazing land and forest. His name is Santo Alto.'"

Madame Adoni interrupted Copely.

"Please," she said, "forgive me and say the name again."

"Santo Alto," said Copely. "Rodriguez Santo Alto."

"Thank you," she said; "Santo Alto."

The ghost of a smile flitted across Copely's face.

"It wouldn't be an easy name to live with," he said. "One would change it if one could."

"True," said Madame Adoni. "I'm sure the good man's daughters were glad to go."

"He wasn't a good man," said Copely, "and he had but one daughter—but one ewe lamb." He said this quite sarcastically, and Madame Adoni smiled into his face.

"O'Connor," Copely resumed, "O'Connor said he wasn't going to go into detail—that he'd just say baldly what happened to him, and leave the filling-in to imagination. Santo Alto, it seemed, was a Spanish gentleman of the old school—in more ways than one. But his daughter, O'Connor said, belonged to no known school. She was an original—a girl of metal and physical genius. She wasn't beautiful, O'Connor said, but she could look beautiful if she wanted to, and she could sing with inimitable humor or

pathos. And she could dance all the decent dances of all nations and ages. And she could speak pretty nearly all the languages in the world."

"Why continue?" said Madame Adoni. "This O'Connor, already married to the love of his youth, falls head over ears in love with Santo Alto's talented daughter."

"You tell the story," said Copely sweetly. He gazed into Madame Adoni's starry eyes until presently she laughed aloud.

"Damon," she said, "limit this young man to one of two things. Let him abandon his story and make love to me openly, or let him stick to his story and stop lacerating my heart with covert glances."

"Madame Adoni," said Copely, and he spoke very confidentially and seriously, just as if nobody but themselves had been within earshot, "you are right, and I apologize. I will not make love to you until the story is ended—absolutely ended." Then he laughed, and puckering his eyebrows, said: "But then look out for me. When I am thoroughly aroused I am a very fascinating man."

"Damon will protect me," said Madame Adoni, "if I ask him. But I won't ask him. I shall enjoy being hounded by your fascinations until I inevitably succumb to them. Can't you limit this story to ten words, like a telegram, so that we may begin the other?"

Her laugh was as sweet and easy as the sound of a small brook. But Copely did not laugh.

"There is a Mexican proverb: 'Not with me the end—with God.' I can't end the story, you see, because it is not yet ended."

"Never will be," Garrison ventured to Mrs. Damon, "if this keeps up."

"O'Connor," said Copely, "went into the Acapulco mine, and it seemed very rich to him; but to Santo Alto it seemed the opposite. He advised O'Connor very strongly to have nothing to do with it. Well, O'Connor ran the mine up, and Santo Alto ran it down, until it turned out that Santo

Alto had had for many years a jealous eye upon the property and wanted it for himself. When Santo Alto found that O'Connor saw through him he laughed in a frank, hearty way, and said that all was fair in love and war. But O'Connor had been brought up to think that anything dishonest and underhand was rotten, whether in love or war or anything. And he told Santo Alto so. O'Connor was—not *is*, but was—the kind of man who said the truth as he saw it and when he saw it. He hadn't a moral fear in the world, being himself just as straight and fine as a steel wire. Well, Santo Alto, utterly unabashed at being found out, took the other tack. He admitted that the mine was very rich and begged O'Connor to let him in on the ground floor. 'I have influence,' he said; 'give me a fourth interest in the mine, and I will guarantee that you have no trouble with labor or with government.' 'No,' said O'Connor; 'you haven't been straight with me. I'm very sorry, because I liked you, but after the way you ran down the property so as to get it cheap for yourself I don't like you. I thank you for your hospitality, but I cannot but think that it was offered, not for my sake, but for the sake of what you might get out of me.'

"Santo Alto shrugged his shoulders and smiled. And O'Connor went upstairs to pack up. Of course he couldn't stay in the house any longer. Well, he opened the door of his room, and there was Santo Alto's daughter. He was surprised naturally, but he bowed very politely and apologized for intruding.

"I came to pack my things,' he said; 'I am going.' He held the door open, expecting that she would go, but she did not move.

"You have quarreled with papa,' she said, 'but you haven't quarreled with me.'

"How do you know that I have quarreled with your father?"

"I listened,' she said, 'and as it was evident that you would want to leave the house at once, and would come at

once to your room to pack, I ran upstairs and got here ahead of you.'

"I see,' said O'Connor. But he didn't see at all.

"You haven't quarreled with me,' she said again.

"No, indeed,' said O'Connor. 'I admire you immensely. You're the most versatile and talented girl in the world.'

"Then,' said she, and O'Connor says she blushed like a poppy, 'why go?'

"O'Connor was dreadfully embarrassed. I think he said that he tried to adopt a flippant tone. He said something like: 'Now if I hadn't a wife of my own—' But whatever he may have started to say, he never got away with it. He said the girl made a spring for him, and flung her arms about him—they were strong as steel, he said—and began to scream. She screamed so that it was fearful to hear. O'Connor said that for a moment he was mentally and physically paralyzed. Suddenly she let go of him, and gave his hair a violent musing; then she mussed her own hair, drew out the pins and combs and flung them here and there, and ran about the room overturning chairs and making a terrible racket, and all the while screaming and screaming. Half a minute later Santo Alto and a couple of men, all three with sawed-off shotguns, rushed into the room, and with them a fat, oily priest that lived in the house.

"Of course," said Copely, "it was all a put-up game."

"Why?" said Madame Adoni. She was breathing rather quickly as if greatly interested.

"Because," said Copely, "if it hadn't been a put-up game, if they had really believed what she pretended, they would have shot O'Connor like a mad dog then and there. Because they didn't prove that it was a put-up game."

"The girl flung herself into her parent's arms, screaming to him to save her, and sobbing and sliding at last into a shuddering heap at his feet."

"I was passing the door,' she sobbed, 'when suddenly it opened and he caught me by the throat and dragged me

into his room.' Then she went into such a storm of sobs that she couldn't articulate.

"O'Connor told me that the girl's acting was so wonderful that he himself almost believed what she said. He saw himself, as it were, in some horrible nightmare, springing upon her and dragging her into his room. But he turned to the father and told him exactly what had happened. 'Your daughter,' he said, 'has gone suddenly mad.'

"If she is mad,' said Santo Alto, 'it's you who have driven her mad. You dog, you abomination'!

"O'Connor went over to the girl and caught her by the wrist. 'Stand up and tell the truth,' he said sternly. But, to his horror, the face that she turned to him had in it nothing of a human being. Her eyes were dull and sightless; there was foam on her lips, and suddenly she snapped at his hand.

"The priest caught her from behind in his arms, and held her, and although she struggled violently and snapped at him, she did not free herself nor actually bite him.

"Stand back,' said the priest. 'The nearness of the man who has injured her drives her to violence.' And O'Connor did stand back, and her paroxysm did cease, until presently she was quite quiet. Her knees seemed to give way, and she sank once more to the floor and commenced to play with the flowers in the carpet. She crooned to them and tried to gather them. Her face, O'Connor said, was terribly pathetic, very beautiful and at the same time absolutely imbecile. He turned to Santo Alto.

"I have told you everything,' he said, 'exactly as it happened.'

"To believe you,' said Santo Alto, 'I have only to look from your face to hers,' and as his eyes rested on his daughter's imbecile face he groaned and shuddered.

"She has been frightened out of her wits, poor baby,' said the priest. 'It needs but half an eye to see that.'

"The girl continued to play with the flowers in the carpet, and to coo over

them, and to make sounds that were like speech, but not speech.

"Well,' said Santo Alto, 'we need no further evidence against this man. And there is no better place than the present for vengeance.' He leveled his shotgun at O'Connor's stomach.

"Up to this time it seems O'Connor had not noticed the guns, or had not realized that anybody intended to shoot him. He had been more angry with the girl, and sorry for her when he thought she had really gone mad, and bewildered by all that had happened, than anything else. But when he saw the gun pointing at him he said that he turned suddenly sick with fear. He said that every decent and manly trait went out of him; he weakened and shook, and two or three times almost fell down. And the first thing he really knew he was on his knees mumbling to them for Christ's sake not to shoot him, and holding his hands in front of him and picking at the air—he realized, as I say, that he was doing all this—and he wasn't ashamed. He was almost palsied with fear—he wasn't a man any more—he was just a groveling cur."

"How very frightful!" said Madame Adoni. She lay back in her chair with half-closed eyes. But now she opened them wide. "Go on," she said.

"Well," said Copely, "they were just going to shoot, or it seemed so, when the priest said sharply: 'Don't shoot.'

"Santo Alto turned to the priest. 'Why not? Why not?' he said quickly.

"Let him first make reparation,' said the priest.

"Reparation then,' said Santo Alto; 'let him.'

"Let him first marry her,' said the priest.

"Never!" cried Santo Alto.

"Be advised—be advised,' said the priest, 'or, at least, hear me out.' He drew Santo Alto a little to one side and they talked in whispers. Santo Alto finally appeared to assent to what the priest had suggested, for he turned to O'Connor and said:

"He is right. You must change

your faith to hers and marry her. It is the least that you can do.'

"And then you will not shoot me,' said O'Connor. Now that the gun was no longer pointing at him he was not so frightened. He could think a little, and he guessed that the whole thing was a put-up game. He was more angry now than frightened—but not much more.

"No,' said the priest; 'not so long as you treat her kindly.'

"Well,' said O'Connor, 'I can't do it; I'm already married.' He spoke rather boldly. He did not now think that they really intended to shoot him. Santo Alto turned to the priest and questioned him facially, so to speak, and the priest said:

"His recent actions in the sight of God annulled any former marriage. Also in our faith we do not hold as true marriages those contracted in any other faith. I pronounce Señor O'Connor free to marry your daughter. Of course, if he *will* not, there is but one thing to do.'

"Then they pointed the guns again at O'Connor, and again the fear got the better of him. I'm afraid I've been a long time talking. He acted like a cur—he admits that. He wishes to heaven now that he had let them shoot him. But he couldn't, he said—he couldn't. He told them yes, to go ahead, and shut his eyes and heard them counting one—two—and then he caved in. He embraced the girl's faith and married her."

"Copely," said Damon, "do you, knowing this about the man, speak to him any more, know him, let him come near you?"

"Why, yes," said Copely. "I dare say I should have done just what he did. Most men would."

"H'm," said Garrison. "What do you think, Madame Adoni?"

"I?" she said lazily. "I would marry anyone rather than be shot. But still I don't understand"—she turned to Copely; "*why*, in heaven's name, did they want him to marry her?"

"There are three good reasons.

One, they wanted a hold on him, because of the mine; two, the girl was terribly in love with him—" He hesitated.

"That's two," said Madame Adoni, and I think there was a kind of challenging note in her voice. "What is your third?"

"Why," said Copely, and he lowered his voice in a slight awkwardness and embarrassment, "I think that perhaps she *had* to marry someone."

"Oh!" said Madame Adoni softly, and after a pause she sighed, I think, and said:

"I wonder if by any chance there is another side to the story? What was that?"

We all heard the shot. It was not far off, and brought Damon to his feet frowning.

"Who the deuce can be letting off a gun round here?" he said. "It sounded as if it was somewhere near the stable."

"It can't be anything," said Mrs. Damon. "It may have been way, way off. Sounds in these hills—"

Then we heard a sound of feet running hard, and one of Damon's grooms, breathless and disheveled and wild with excitement, seemed to burst from the night into our midst.

"Come quick, sir!" he said. "Madame Adoni's shiffer has bin and shot hisself!"

"Good God!" said Damon. "Telephone for a doctor, somebody." His voice came from a distance. Copely and I ran after him.

Madame Adoni's chauffeur was lying beside her car. In one hand was a new-looking revolver of big caliber. He had shot himself in the stomach, but he was still conscious when we got to him, and when he saw Copely he smiled, and spoke to him brokenly, but in the voice of a cultivated gentleman.

"Not with me the end," he said; "with God." He turned away his face and in a few minutes died.

When we got back to the house Damon said to Madame Adoni, as gently as he could:

"Madame Adoni, the man is dead.

For various reasons you will wish to return to town. Copely has volunteered to run your car to town for you."

Madame Adoni drew herself up coldly.

"As you wish," she said. "Do I understand that I am leaving your house because I wish to, or because you are turning me out of it?"

"You are going," said Damon, "because you wish to go."

Madame Adoni bowed, and turning, walked slowly to the end of the terrace and back.

"Damon," she said gently, "believe me, there was another side to the story. But never mind that; whenever Mr. Copely is ready—"



THE STORM

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

I THOUGHT the storm its might had spent,
That deep as life though love had grown,
No more would sails be lashed and rent,
The ship no more from harbor blown.

I look on thee, and strive in vain
To keep my course o'er calmer seas,
For the resistless hurricane
Breaks on the ocean's mysteries.

I cannot find or peace or rest
In storm or calm, by sun or star;
Driven on this visionary quest
I fly beyond the harbor bar.

The eternal ocean stretcheth wide;
No chart have I in this mad race;
And yet, the very storm may guide
Unto the glory of thy face!



"WHY does he let his wife venture out alone in his auto?"

"He's anxious to see what will happen when two unmanageable things come together."



WHILE figures won't lie, the trouble seems to be that we don't all figure alike.

PROPINQUITY

By LOUIS BAURY

THE fire was burning cheerily in the grate and the drinks were excellent. More than that, the chairs which we had drawn up close to the blaze were of that soft, deep, cuddle-down-and-be-cozy-and-don't-go-away sort that by being invariably placed in clubs have broken up so many homes; and the combination was one which invariably drove Lederer to theorizing. Now Lederer was a bachelor, with not a thought in the world outside of his own sweet comfort, and not a drop of sentimentality in that huge body of his, which was a very dream of ecstasy from the viewpoint of a Turkish bath rubber. Wherefore, being single and sensible, Lederer confined his theories to subjects of which he knew not a thing, and this time he talked of love.

"Romance is dead," declared Lederer, waving his fourth highball about with all the vigor begot of the preceding three. "Sentiment saw its passing with the advent of steam heat. Does the youthful lover of today go and sing ballads to the one woman in the world beneath her casement? Not a bit of it. The streets are too cold, and the strong officers of the law, who also sadly lack sentiment, would only send him to the observation ward of Bellevue, if they caught him at it. What does this retrograde Lochinvar do? Why, he calls up the press agent of some theater, where he knows the crowds are slim, begs a couple of seats for himself and his lady love and lets a lot of painted hirelings sing his songs for him. The music is only ten degrees worse—but the theater is steam heated! Pfaugh!" cried Lederer in disgust. "I tell you the times are degenerate when our

young men, instead of looking soulfully into Phyllis's eyes, look up her father in Bradstreet's. Love, I say, my boy, or what passed for love in this deplorable unromantic world of ours, is nothing more than propinquity."

"Nonsense!" I replied, not because I have any real views on the subject, but because it is pleasanter to talk myself than to listen to Lederer. "Love is the one touch of nature which makes all men botanists. Love is the be-all and end-all of existence, the unquenchable spark which ignites the plug, to speak modernly. Love is the mainstay and support of poets, novelists, jewelers and florists; it is the—"

"Stop!" cried Lederer. "Stop! You are a fool. Worse than that, you are a blind fool; and worse than that—but there is nothing worse than that, except *being* in love. And to tell the truth, I more than half suspect you of it. And if you are in love, it is with some sylphlike creature who has been often thrust in your path and whom you couldn't get around."

"But one *could* get around a sylph," I protested. "I know; I have tried it."

"That is a quibble," returned Lederer severely. "Besides, it breaks my train of utterance, which is in accord with your usually vile manners. As I was saying, if you are in love it is with someone from whom you could not get away."

"But," I said again, "one never can get away from the person he loves."

"That is a childish and altogether elemental notion, which proves conclusively that you *are* in love, and so disqualifies you entirely for this highly instructive discussion I am holding.

You are in love with someone with whom you came by chance into close and frequent contact. For, let me repeat, while a drugstore complexion and a bottle of peroxide may prove of great aid, love is fundamentally and basically merely the outgrowth of propinquity."

Perceiving that Lederling was fairly started beyond all checking, I ordered more drinks and allowed him to continue.

"To take a specific instance and remove this weighty question from the realm of speculation," went on Lederling, wrapping his tongue lovingly around that last phrase, "look at Dolly Armstruther. I say, look at Dolly Armstruther, because she is typical of the twentieth century American girl. She has money—which all properly minded American girls in these unsentimental times have no trouble in acquiring—and when one has said that one has said enough—sometimes one has said too much, but not in the case of Dolly Armstruther. Dolly Armstruther was born in the lap of luxury—which means that her father had a seat on the Stock Exchange. When first she opened her soft violet eyes and gazed out into the highly romantic section of Fifth Avenue pavement which stretched before her house she beheld the youthful figure of James Jeffington De Kahn.

"James at that time was probably ringing in a fire alarm, not because there was any fire, but because he liked to watch the engines go by, or stretching a string across the street to tangle up horses and give a practical demonstration of a congestion of traffic. James's father was perfectly able to pay for it, so why shouldn't he? Dolly, seeing this, admired his reckless daring as well as his desire for illustrated knowledge, and said to her bediamonded nurse: 'What is that?' And the faithful domestic replied: 'That is a boy, who will some day be a man, even as you will be a woman.' Whereat Dolly in all probability said: 'Oh! Will you buy him for me?' And the nurse replied: 'If you are a very good girl you may some day have him all for your own without buy-

ing him at all, for men are the things that spend money—women save it. Now, don't bother me any more; I've got to go and meet the policeman.' And Dolly smiled serenely and resolved to be good, in order that James Jeffington De Kahn might some day spend on her the money his grandfather had earned. All of which shows that Dolly learned very early the first lesson of womankind.

"But note," continued Lederling, pausing just long enough to take a long pull at his highball, "how the chance of propinquity at the outset enters into this affair. If Mickey O'Sullivan had happened to have been on the other side of the street at that time, he would undoubtedly have been engaged in some occupation every bit as devilish and alluring as that with which young James Jeffington De Kahn was busying himself. But Mickey was *not* there; it was James; and so the first chapter in an altogether ordinary romance—if I may so grossly misapply the word—was written.

"Now you know Miss Armstruther and you know young De Kahn, so why should I go into detail? You know how they attended private schools within a few doors of each other, and how De Kahn at first looked askance at the fair young lady. That was not because she was not fair enough, but because he still retained the proper contempt for the other sex—the contempt with which he was born. We are all born with that—it is our birthright; and it usually takes the first fifteen years of our lives to overcome it. The love for women, like the love for strong drink, is altogether an acquired taste, and I am inclined to believe that the love of drink is decidedly the less harmful.

"Well, like all others of his kind, young De Kahn in time overcame his birthright. Then he began to carry Miss Armstruther's books home from school for her and do all the other foolish things which youths of that age do. Just what these may be, I can't possibly say, being the one golden exception which proves the rule, and hav-

ing clung to all the things the Almighty gave me at birth, trying to add to, not detract from them. But whatever these things are, he did them, and she began to practise the effective use of those violet eyes of hers."

"If you are as immune as you boast," I interrupted, "how do you come to have such intimate knowledge of Miss Armstruther's eyes?"

"I am now telling a story," returned Lederer, "and, in a story, all girls' eyes are either hazel or violet. Miss Armstruther has light hair, and hazel eyes with light hair are unnatural. Miss Armstruther is not unnatural, or her case could not possibly be typical of all the world. Don't attribute such things to me, and don't break in again unless you wish to order a drink. After a time they both went to a boarding school and were separated," went on Lederer, continuing a story I knew much better than he. He met other girls; she met other young men; both conducted the regulation little flirtations, but the inexorable law of propinquity was working all the while and they thought only of each other. Then summer came, and their families had adjoining houses at Newport—the story would be much less effective if it had been Long Island, so I'm glad it was Newport—and there they met again. Their little hearts pitter-patted with joy at sight of each other, and, having grown apace, they no longer carried books but motored and danced and canoed and swam together.

"Here is old Propinquity again asserting himself. If they had not both gone to the same summer resort, someone else would have come along and complete happiness could have been had only with the someone else. But they *did* go to the same summer place, and there you are! Finally Miss Armstruther 'came out,' and came out much more handsome and fine and alluring than she went in. I believe that it was rumored last summer she had a rather desperate flirtation with a young civil engineer at Newport while De Kahn was away; but the civil engineer was ordered off somewhere, De Kahn came

home, propinquity again asserted itself, and things continued just as if civil engineers were not civil at all but common, ordinary engineers, driving trains of cars around the country—which would make them absolutely impossible.

"Everybody knows how particularly marked young De Kahn's attentions have been to Miss Armstruther this year, how they have been everywhere together and are almost never away from each other. In a few weeks at the most the engagement will be announced. Then they will settle un sentimentally down somewhere, while she will try to give receptions which will make her 'dearest friends' green with envy, and he will study out methods of getting money away from the men he was brought up with, and they will be man and wife, simply because they were thrown constantly together. Sentiment, I tell you," cried Lederer, giving his glass a concluding flourish, "sentiment, romance and love have ceased to exist. Nowadays it's all a mere matter of propinquity. Give me any man and woman, let me bring them constantly into one another's company for even eight months, and I'll give you a marriage and a sample of what passed for love in the twentieth century, every time."

I was going to reply to Lederer, if only to shake his smug self-assurance. I was going to point out that Miss Armstruther and young De Kahn were so temperamentally suited to each other that their match was inevitable in any event, and many other things of like nature. But just then Harry Gatch blew in and plunged down beside us. He was wearing evening clothes, but his hat was pushed from his forehead and he was plainly excited.

"Oh, what an evening I've had!" he wailed. "Why don't you two disreputable loafers get out and do something once in a while, instead of making everyone else work?"

"What is the matter?" we asked together.

"Matter!" cried Gatch. "Haven't you heard the news?"

"If it is a new transatlantic steam-boat record, we have not."

"Transatlantic record be hanged!" replied he. "Dolly Armstruther's eloped!"

"What!" Lederer sat up suddenly and opened his eyes very wide.

"I say," repeated Gatch imperturbably, "Dolly Armstruther's eloped. I've been spending the evening at the house there trying to persuade Mrs. Armstruther not to go into hysterics. I have had very poor success. You disgusting, lazy—"

"But tell us," I broke in, "what are the details? Who is it?"

"Oh, it's that young fool of an engineer she met last summer, who hasn't a cent to his name. You remember the fellow who made such shocking love to her? Well, she left a touching little

note saying happiness for her was only with him, and could they forgive her, and all that sort of thing and—"

"Lederer," said I triumphantly, "I was just going to reply to your absurd theories. I don't need to now. There is the answer, and in the very case you yourself selected. Where is your theory now?"

Gatch looked at us wonderingly. Lederer settled back in his chair again and calmly lit a cigar.

"My theory is just as good as ever," he answered judiciously, "but like every other theory in the world, it has to take second place before the principle on which the universe is built. You never can tell about a woman."

Which was not only unoriginal, but illustrative of the abominable way Lederer has of avoiding an issue.



ROSE TRYSTS

By THOMAS WALSH

BLOSSOM and flit of wing
Scampered together,
Perfume and zephyring,
Friends of fine weather;
Snows on the heather,
And how the wind blows!
Where shall our hearts bring
The songs of the rose?

Snowflake and ashen skies
At their old trysting;
But there are azure eyes,
Heart, for thy listing,
Where are persisting
The rose dawns that throng
Ever where Love hies
With petals of song.

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

By MRS. OSCAR BERINGER

THE Lady Moderna Decadentia came of a long line of Belted Earls. Her ancestors received their patent of nobility direct from the hands of that estimable monarch, Charles the Second, in whose reign the forbears of so many of our distinguished families found a footing on the lowest rung of the ladder of promotion.

For valuable services rendered to his sovereign, plain Mr. Decadentia became the Earl of Demoralis-Le-Mond.

A later descendant was popularly known as "Old Immoral." A feminine offshoot became renowned as "Demi."

The sole remaining representative of her honored name, Lady Moderna Decadentia owed certain bourgeoisie hankerings after the Simple Life to an admixture of her progenitors with the proletariat, into the details of which it is superfluous to enter here. Educated in a French convent, she had spent half a dozen fragments of seasons under the wing of her beautiful young aunt, the Duchess of Conventionalis.

At the age of twenty-five, Lady Moderna had exhausted the attractions of sitting out swimming matches at the Bath Club, surreptitious cigarette teas in chambers, Wagner's operas and Salome dancing.

She had also become a Minor Poet. She was able to reconstruct in vivid and mordant tints the mad, bad days of Charles the Second and his Steenie, an age in which the three R's spelled revelry, riot and ruin.

Lady Moderna Decadentia was, in fact, a throwback.

By the light of this preamble, her pilgrimage into the Wilds of Nature in

search of the Simple Life will seem to the receptive onlooker but as the outcome of repressed instincts and natural heredity.

It came about like this: A few words with her aunt on the subject of a mutual admirer hurtled (she inherited a hot temper on the mother's side) Lady Moderna, bag and baggage, into a taxicab and out of the Duchess's aura.

As she sat idly scanning the *Morning Post* in an unimpeachable family hotel kept by a former butler in the Demoralis-Le-Mond family, her eyes fell upon the following:

TO LOVERS OF BEAUTY—A cottage to be let at once. An exceptional opportunity. Old oak and chintz; beautiful fourposters; lovely garden; all the advantages of old-fashioned sanitation. Address VERITAS, Batt's Bridge, Slatery, Bideham.

"I am a lover of beauty," murmured Lady Moderna.

And then she read the advertisement a second time aloud. Its appeal was irresistible.

"I love beauty!" she cried defiantly, as if in reply to an invisible challenger. "And I adore fourposters. Conventions sicken me. I will cast them behind me. I will revert: I will become an Early Settler. I will hew my own wood and draw my own water. I will live alone, naturally, beautifully. I shall be inspired to write greatly in the Cottage of My Dreams."

The fact was accomplished. A prepaid wire containing an offer for a year's tenancy was despatched to Veritas. The reply of acceptance came promptly. A second wire ran:

Arrive tomorrow before sundown.

DECADENTIA.

It was an appropriate sort of telegram to send on the eve of her return to the land, thought Lady Moderna. Especially by a Minor Poet. "And I shall take a few things down with me," she added in a whisper, so that the Poet side of her might not be wounded.

The practical half of Lady Moderna spent a busy afternoon in the Westminster Stores, where she used the Duchess's number without compunction.

As a result, several large wooden cases awaited her in the parcel room for the morrow's disposal. Having paid tribute to the prose of life, it was time to conciliate the poetry.

This Lady Moderna achieved by ordering a light repast of chicken soufflé and a half-bottle of the dryest possible champagne to be sent up to her room.

As she lounged cosily, half buried in a sea of cushions on a remarkably well stuffed and comfortable Chesterfield, she murmured:

"Naturally Simple, or Simply Natural, it all comes to the same thing in the end. I shall be both."

The rings of her Rassendyll cigarette mounted and melted into thin air. But before they dispersed she saw within them the frame of a picture—the Life Beautiful in the Cottage of Her Dreams.

Lady Moderna Decadentia inaugurated her entry into the Simple Life by taking a third class ticket. She also bestowed twopence on the porter in ratification of her enrollment as a Simple Lifer.

His glance from the wooden cases and her pile of personal luggage to her modest reward rejoiced her soul. Had not Simplicity, and especially Poets, been ever crucified?

Her new creed had intervened and prohibited the purchase of light literature to beguile the weariness of the journey. But Lady Moderna was amply provided with employment in the crystallization of her plans for her future existence. Slowborough Junction brought her a sore temptation with its tea baskets.

"No!" she cried. "No! I will have my first tea under my own dear roof."

As the train slowed into Slatterly, Lady Moderna bounded out, imbued with all the enthusiasm of the Passionate Pilgrim. She was the only passenger who alighted. It was all beautifully peaceful. In answer to her inquiries the station master, who evidently took her for the lady's maid sent down in advance with the luggage, said: "Batt's Bridge? Yes, a trifle over seven miles. No, no vehicles unless specially ordered two days before and. You see, there's a good few 'as a share in the old mare."

"But what am I to do?" asked Lady Moderna a little helplessly.

"You might walk," said the station master.

"Walk!"

All Lady Moderna's enthusiasm failed to delete the horror from her echo of the station master's suggestion.

"But there's all your stuff," he went on. "Where's Old Daggs? He might take it, and you, too. It's on his way 'ome. 'Ere, Daggs! Daggs!"

The door of the porter's room opened. An old man with bright blue eyes and cheeks like a wrinkled Ribstone Pippin stood on the threshold.

"Be station afire?" asked Old Daggs satirically.

"I want to go to Batt's Bridge," said Lady Moderna.

"Yew be never for th' cottage?"

"Yes," said Lady Moderna meekly.

"Well, if I ain't dommed!" said Old Daggs. "We thort yew wur a gentleman—leastways, one o' them painter chaps."

"I'm not, you see, Daggs," said Lady Moderna with an irrepressible and irresistible smile.

"How many be there of ye?" asked Old Daggs with extenuating inflection.

"Only me," replied Lady Moderna. Old Daggs pointed an accusing finger at her stack of luggage.

"All that for a single 'ooman? Well, I'm— Best take what ye want for to-night and I'll fetch the rest in the marnin'."

Something very near a tear sparkled in Lady Moderna's eye.

"But I've forgotten which is the provision case, Daggs." Old Daggs melted with a resigned sigh. "An' yew won't find much oop at th' cottage. Look'ee, I'd better tell ye to start wi'—Abram, he woan't 'urry hisself wi' that there load."

"Who is Abraham?" asked Lady Moderna with polite inquiry.

"'Oos Abram?" echoed Old Daggs. "Well, that *be* a good 'un. 'Tain't many as doan't know Abram, I'll be bound."

With lightning intuition Lady Moderna smiled again. "I love donkeys," she said.

"Yew doan't know Abram—yet," returned Old Daggs with subtle irony. And then he tackled the luggage with wonderful expedition and deftness.

"Well, at any rate, this is unconventional," thought Lady Moderna. She was determined to look on the bright side of things.

When Old Daggs had retrieved the last of the wooden cases, he stretched down a hand from the top of the pile to Lady Moderna. "Now joomp," he said.

His eye held her. She jumped. "I am living at last!" cried Lady Moderna's tired heart exultantly, as she landed fairly neatly with an unimportant abrasion.

It pleased Abraham, who was a donkey of temperament, to tool along pretty briskly for the first mile or two.

Lady Moderna Decadentia, perched on the top of her wooden cases, balanced on a small cart drawn by a diminutive donkey, presented a somewhat remarkable picture. She realized this in meeting a big, well appointed motor car filled with conventional Philistines. They stared at her rudely. Murmurs of "How very extraordinary!" rose to her ears. She even thought she heard a hatchet-faced woman in a hideous bonnet say "Creature!"

The blessed law of compensation decreed that a little further on they should meet Sir Lancelot Ddoljambe, a distin-

guished young officer stationed at a camp not far distant. He stared, too, but his eyes were full of human sympathy. Abraham selected this moment to jibe violently. Lady Moderna rocked perilously on the top of her pile.

"Can I be of any service?" asked Sir Lancelot with the most respectful anxiety.

"So—so kind," said Lady Moderna, holding on for dear life.

"Greatest pleasure," said Sir Lancelot, whose thoughts were always expressed in tabloid form. He dismounted, and tied up his mare, looking up all the time to see if Lady Moderna was coming down. She also looked at him to see if he was ready to catch her. Old Daggs, who was dragging Abraham on in front, called out: "Give us a push be'ind, will ye? P'r'aps that'll start 'im."

Sir Lancelot pushed with the might of several generations of Ddoljambes. Abraham was suddenly inspired by his sense of humor to plunge wildly forward. Old Daggs was upset, but recovered himself and nimbly clambered up to his seat.

Sir Lancelot was left sprawling in the road, but rose in time to reply to Lady Moderna's wave of farewell as the cart disappeared.

"Most 'straordinary!" he muttered as he remounted his mare Molly. "Wonder who she is, and where she hangs out? 'Straordinary eyes. Doosid rum. But doosid fetchin', by Jove!"

The next turning of the lane brought trouble, not in single spies but battalions.

A detachment of artillery with guns faced Abraham. With a quick side movement he blocked the way.

"Why the goodness gracious don't you take that sweet little cart out of the road?" roared a peppery old Colonel, who was near-sighted and wore a single eyeglass.

Lady Moderna's cheeks glowed in divinest carmine. "We can't," she called down distressfully. "I'm frightfully sorry. But Abraham won't move."

Two hundred pairs of eyes followed

the Colonel's upward stare of astonishment.

"Very sorry, I'm sure," he said. "Didn't see. Blind as a bat. Let me help."

"So *very* kind," said Lady Moderna. And they both smiled. A few words of command, and a quartet of gunners pulled Abraham and pushed the cart to such good purpose that Lady Moderna was out of sight before her gratitude was half expressed.

"Most 'straordinary!" muttered the Colonel in unconscious repetition of Sir Lancelot Ddoljambe. "'Straordinary eyes. Doosid fetchin', by Jove!"

"Dear heaven, how divine!" sighed Lady Moderna as Batt's Bridge in all its sylvan beauty loomed into her line of sight.

"Abram doan't like that there bridge, he doan't," said Old Daggs. "Mostly lies down when he's 'alfways over, 'e do. Just at the rickety bit. But I'll be even wi' 'im this time."

The spectacle of Old Daggs backing over Batt's Bridge, nosebag in hand, closely pressed by Abraham, just out of munching distance, was a sight for the gods. Lady Moderna's spirits began to rise. The pure, thin air quickened her pulses. She had passed through the Valley of Tribulation.

Another half-mile and her heart cried out, "Excelsior!" The Cottage of Her Dreams stood before her.

She felt a little bewildered. It was beautiful and picturesque—almost more beautiful than she had hoped. But it was beauty unkempt, neglected. The windows were dark. No smoke rose from the chimney. At the little white gate, which hung off its hinges, stood two children in sunbonnets.

Lady Moderna suddenly awoke to the sound of Old Daggs's voice. He was unloading the cart.

"I'll chuck these 'ere onto th' paath, t'other side o' th' 'edge, under the cherry tree," he said. "I dussent stay no longer now, else I shall get what for from th' old 'ooman. I'm be'ind my time as it is. Her doan't 'old wi' late 'ours for I."

One of the two children carried a

milk can. She curtsied as Lady Moderna looked at her, and said in one breath:

"Please-mother-says-she-be-that-bad-in-'er-inside-she-caan't-come-to-daay-and-please-ere's-the-key-and-'ere's-the-milk." Another courtsey, and Lady Moderna was alone.

As the last echo of Abraham's small hoofs died away, she looked up at the sky. The first folds of night's soft mantle were falling round her. High above the pines rose a silvery virgin moon, which found glimmering reflection on the latticed panes of the Cottage of Her Dreams.

She listened to the silence of the land, faintly broken by the rustling of the leaves, the sleepy twitter of the birds.

She sighed, a long, deep drawn sigh of content, which cleansed her soul and clothed it in a new white garment.

As her eyes fell upon her stack of luggage, prose reclaimed her. She was faced by no light task. For a brief moment she felt overwhelmed, appalled. Then atavic force woke within her. "My first tea!" she cried. And raising the milk can with a wave of dedication to the little house awaiting her, she drained it greedily. The Decadentias were always excellent trencher women.

Refreshed and revived, she walked up the path which led to the plateau on which the cottage stood. A late up-staying robin watched her with all the curiosity of his race.

She was nervous but happy. "Now," she cried and plunged the key into the door. All was still within. A faint perfume of Indian tatties rose to her nostrils as she paused on the threshold. Further inside it became lavender scented. East and West had met in happy union.

Veritas was as good as his word. Old oak and chintz, beautiful old four-posters, they were all there. The linen press and the china cupboard held treasures. The opportunity was in very truth exceptional. And then Lady Moderna listened to the silence again. Within walls it was appalling, broken mysteriously every now and

then by inexplicable noises which struck terror to her soul. The very furniture seemed to be endowed with speech in the crick-crack language.

A hurried search discovered a blessed packet of candles forgotten in the little storeroom. Her *châtelaine* provided matches. With trembling fingers she lit up every room. "They mustn't guess I am alone," she whispered with quivering lips. The mysterious "they" were represented by a field mouse, beset by family cares during a long drought, and two squirrels romping on the roof with a couple of last winter's nuts between their paws. Below, a big Persian cat was stalking them. "That gate, too," remembered Lady Moderna with a thrill of terror; "they might come in there."

The walk down the path into the black night was a sore trial. But she felt more secure when she had half lifted, half pushed the gate into its allotted place, and tried to find comfort in the hope that "they" would fail to notice the absence of the hinge. She looked up the lane. Not a soul was in sight. Not a leaf was stirring. The stars were coming out, and the new moon shone down on her with friendly radiance. She felt a little reassured, and selecting her dressing bag from the heap under the cherry tree, she reascended the path to the little dwelling above.

Its lights welcomed her, and to make assurance doubly sure, she piled a heavy oak table and two chairs against the door after she had locked it. Then she took out a small revolver from her dressing case, loaded it and placed it on the table ready for use if "they" should come.

A poignant hankering after the contents of the provision case was sternly repressed at the thought of a second plunge into the terrors of the downward path.

Taking her courage and her dressing case in both hands, Lady Moderna ascended to what had at once appealed to her as her bedroom. The moon streamed in through the lattice window, which was open.

"My first night under my own dear roof," said Lady Moderna in a small voice, with a watchful eye and an alert ear.

She was prepared for the worst, and determined not to be taken unawares. The shock half paralyzed her, when a pale face with disheveled hair, surmounted by a battered hat, met her startled eyes in a beautiful old Dutch mirror. It was herself! "You're dirty and you're afraid to go down and look for the water," she said to her reflection with cutting scorn. "What a rotter you are!"

No food—no water—the door barricaded—her pistol handy. This was life, indeed!

Bivouacking for the night was, of course, the only possibility. Moreover, Lady Moderna had always been instructed by the excellent nuns that nothing was more dangerous than damp sheets—even for a Poet.

Fortified by the possession of two whole candles and her match box within reach, Lady Moderna wrapped her rug round her and threw herself on the fourposter. As her head touched the pillow a far bell chimed nine strokes.

"Eight—nine o'clock!" she counted. The humor of going to bed at nine o'clock, and the remembrance of the ducal dining room at that hour, with dinner in progress and its army of footmen in plush and silk stockings anticipating every need, struck Lady Moderna with so much force that she laughed heartily. But only for a moment. The sound of her own laughter rang out so eerily in the surrounding stillness that panic once more overtook her, and, like a child, she buried her head in the rug to stifle her fears.

A glorious sun shone high in the heavens when Lady Moderna awoke. The birds were singing; the sky was blue; the shadows and the terrors of the night had evaporated.

"Water and food," cried Lady Moderna, who, humanly speaking, and apart from a few pardonable affections, was chock-full of healthy instincts. Having reduced her hair to

submission, she proceeded to tie over it a square of brilliant blue silk artfully twisted. This was intended partly to strike an appropriate color note, and the rest as an outward and visible token of servitude. She then thoroughly cleansed her face, neck and hands with cold cream from her dressing bag. As she completed her toilet she heard the gate rattle. She looked out. The two children of the previous night stood can in hand.

"Please-'ere's-the-milk-and-I-can't-open-the-gaat."

"Wait a minute. I'll come down," cried Lady Moderna from the window. Conventions had flown out long before.

She ran down the path.

"Tell your mother," she said as she took the can, "I want a jar of Keating. And when is she coming? And where is the water?" The two sunbonnets disappeared. Lady Moderna was engaged in desperate conflict with the provision case, which her sharpened instinct had identified, when the postman passed on a bicycle. "I shall have some letters for you to take by the next post," called out Lady Moderna with a fine sense of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.

"That'll be tomorrer, then, unless you've got 'em ready now," he replied, with his eyes fixed on the blue bow. "I doan't come up 'ere only once a day."

"Where's the nearest telegraph office?" asked Lady Moderna.

"Two miles t'other side o' th' bridge." The sunbonnets bobbed up again at the gate.

"Please-mother-says-she-caan't-come-no-more-'cos-we've-got-a-noo-baby-an'-the-water's-in-the-well-an'-do-yew-mean-Keating's-marmelade-an'-where-is-the-can?"

Lady Moderna gazed helplessly at the sunbonnet.

"The can?" she repeated blankly. She felt as if she had outlived an earthquake. The catastrophe was final. There was no appeal. The new baby was absolute.

"If-you-ain't-got-no-moog," said the sunbonnet, with Machiavelian resource

and a touch of depreciatory inference, "I'll-'ave-the-can-wot-yew-tooked-off-me-last-night."

"I am—I—" returned Lady Moderna with seeming irrelevance and free translation. But the simple assertion chronicled a cataclysm in her philosophy.

The song of the besom and the whisk of the dusting brush resounded in the cottage until noon.

"Better than Sandow," muttered Lady Moderna as she lay on the floor vigorously sweeping under the beds, her toes only remaining visible. Her methods were effective if primary. She presented an engaging figure in her artist's cotton overall, and looked barely eighteen. She survived sundry tragedies which threatened momentary annihilation. The well was discovered, and she found herself wedged in its mouth, with an overfilled bucket too heavy to land. Five minutes spent in fruitless tugging nearly reduced her to tears.

"Oh, for a man!" she cried. And then she blushed beautifully at her own desire. With a superhuman effort she managed, by tilting most of its contents over her feet, to wind the bucket sufficiently high to swing it on to dry land.

"And this is drawing one's own water," she mused, as she got into dry footgear.

From wood chopping she came off badly. The axe fixed itself immovably in the lid of a packing case. In the struggle to divorce it she chipped herself more effectually than the wood.

"I wonder, did Eve chop wood in the Garden of Eden?" pondered Lady Moderna as she tied up her finger.

"But, of course, there was Adam—"

She suffered her worst defeat at the hands of the kitchen range.

The inwardness of dampers and a down draught had not occurred to her. With infinite trouble she had laid and lit the fire. "My first dear fire on my own dear hearth," she murmured. It was a sulky, ill-conditioned brute of a fire from the start. Seated on a three-legged stool in front of it, Lady Moderna blew for all she was worth through the

medium of a small gilt bellows. Just like Cinderella in the story books.

The results were disastrous. Clouds of smoke filled the kitchen. The pungent vapor deluged her cheeks with dusky tears pouring from smarting eyes. She groped her way through Cimmerian gloom to open windows and doors. All at once she cried with a lightning inspiration: "The dampers!"

It was a brilliant specimen of feminine logic. "If smoke comes in the wrong place, there must be a right place for it to go to."

Lady Moderna found it. By a miracle of good luck, having evaded the Charybdis of asphyxiation, she escaped the Scylla of putting an empty kettle on to boil.

Having cleaned the kitchen and routed the last traces of smoke, Lady Moderna found it necessary to retire from the scene of action for a bath and change of raiment.

She was beginning to feel a little weary when she heard the gate rattle. The sunbonnets had returned on their way to afternoon school.

A chicken still in feathers was handed over to her.

"Please-mother-says-she-ain't-'ad-no-time-t'-pluck-'im-'cos-o'-our-noo-baby-but-'ee's-deaded-right-enough-lor-didn't-'ee-squawk!"

Having covered herself and the kitchen and filled the very air with feathers, Lady Moderna was delighted to find the chicken a fine, heavy bird. Its contents were a foul reality at lunch.

Lady Moderna became a vegetarian for the rest of the day, and subsisted upon tomatoes, bananas and cream crackers.

Weary but not defeated, she retired for a siesta to her fourposter. She left the doors downstairs wide open. "They" held high festival in her absence. The Persian cat commandeered the chicken. The robin brought down his mate to share the feast of cracker crumbs. The field mouse collected a store for her family. The squirrels tasted bananas for the first time in their lives. A blackbird with a game

wing, which trailed and held him faithful to Mother Earth, found compensation for his calamity in picking a large hole in a piece of Stilton which he had discovered in the larder. His tastes were sophisticated. Lady Moderna slept the sleep of the exhausted. She dreamed of bees, and awoke to find the air filled with an ever increasing volume of sound like a gigantic buzzing.

A shout from the garden brought her to the window.

On the lawn stood Old Daggs, describing wide circles with his arms, his face ablaze with excitement.

Outside the gate a horseman in khaki was vainly endeavoring to make his steed pass it. Every try resulted in a rush up the bank or a frantic backing into the ditch. The storm of sound in the air increased with threatening intensity.

"What is it?" cried Lady Moderna out of the window.

"They be swaarmin'," cried Old Daggs.

"What is swarming?" called out Lady Moderna tremulously. At that moment the horseman looked up. It was Sir Lancelot Ddoljambe.

"By Jove!" was all he said as he saluted. But it seemed to mean a good deal.

"Ere," said Old Daggs; "can yew leave that theer 'orse?"

"I'll tether her further down," said Lancelot. "I can't get her past the gate." And he looked up and smiled at Lady Moderna, who blushed. The storm of noise was coming nearer.

"What is swarming?" she cried.

"Bees," said Old Daggs. "Yew've got a hive in your kitchen chimley. It's them Latey's bees wot are swaarm-in'. Like as not we'll gather 'em in if we're spry. Sarve 'em right if they lose 'em."

Sir Lancelot vaulted lightly over the little white gate. "Molly's all right. What do you want?"

"Go to th' missis," ordered Old Daggs, "and ask for the lid o' a tin saucepan—an' look sharp."

Lady Moderna had reached the door before Sir Lancelot.

"I want the lid of a tin saucepan," he said.

"What for?" gasped Lady Moderna with round eyes.

"Don't know. Got to look sharp," said Sir Lancelot.

"But—" began Lady Moderna.

"Where are the saucepans?" asked Sir Lancelot. "The lids are sure to be somewhere around. Come along and look." And they went together.

"Be yew agoin' to be all night?" roared out Old Daggs, who was clapping his hands like a dervish.

"Right you are, old sport," said Sir Lancelot, coming out hurriedly, armed with the lid of a fish kettle. "Where do I come in?"

"Coom alongside o' me," ordered Old Daggs, "and beat that theer sort o' soft like, and keep on abeatin' till I tells ye to stop."

When Lady Moderna resumed her post of vantage at the window a wonderful picture met her eyes.

Old Daggs, with mysterious waving of arms and handclappings, jumped backward and forward on the grass plot, as in an Eastern dance. Sir Lancelot beat the top of the fish kettle like a tom-tom, with his eyes fixed on a dark cloud which whirled and swirled above their heads with an ever increasing volume of sound and menace.

"Bees, by Jove!" cried Sir Lancelot.

"How brave he is!" thought Lady Moderna. "And how extremely good-looking!"

"Latey's bees!" shouted Old Daggs triumphantly. "And by jiggers, we've got 'em!"

To the accompaniment of Sir Lancelot's tom-tom the cloud circled round and round Lady Moderna's kitchen chimney in ever decreasing numbers and tone volume, until the last ring of bees was lost to sight and hearing as into a magician's bottle.

"If they want 'em now," cried Old Daggs drily, "let 'em come and sort 'em out!"

The feud of the Lateys and the Daggses is too serious a matter to touch upon here.

"Come in and have a smoke and tea,"

said Lady Moderna, when Sir Lancelot came round to the back door to restore the lid of the fish kettle and receive her thanks.

"What about Molly?" said Sir Lancelot.

"Can't you bring Molly up the garden?" said Lady Moderna.

"'Ow be yew agettin' on up th' cottage?" grunted Old Daggs. "I ain't bin able t' get yew out o' mind. Never bin used t' fadge for yourself wi' them mossels o' 'ands, 'ave ye? There's my gell 'ome. She'll come and do for ye. There ain't no dependin' on females wi' babbies. It's too lonesome o' nights for a young 'ooman like yew."

Lady Moderna's eyelashes glittered suspiciously as she welcomed Old Daggs's proposal.

"Will she come up tonight?" she asked, with a keen remembrance of the crick-crack horrors of the night before.

"I'll see t' that," said Old Daggs. And then she showed him the wound on her finger, and was duly comforted and sympathized with.

"An' now I'll get that theer young feller to gi' me a 'and wi' the boxes. Couldn't get t' sleep last night, lest the rain might come and sop 'em. All the old 'ooman's fault, as I telled her. I never gets no peace."

When Sir Lancelot returned with Molly, whose antipathy to the gate seemed to have melted into thin air, Daggs informed him of the necessity to bear a hand with the missis's luggage.

"Delighted, I'm sure," said Sir Lancelot, with a glance at Lady Moderna. "But what about Molly?"

"I'll take care of her," said Lady Moderna. "I always get on with horses." And then she and Molly made acquaintance over a couple of lumps of sugar, while Old Daggs and Sir Lancelot labored up and down with her various possessions.

When Old Daggs had placed all to his satisfaction and received a liberal reward, his last words promised the arrival of his daughter Phyllis before dark. "And now we'll get tea," said Lady Moderna to Sir Lancelot, "if

you'll tie up Molly. I've only got crackers and Cape gooseberries. I haven't come to the other things yet."

"I love them," said Sir Lancelot.

"Take a cracker for Molly," said Lady Moderna.

When he came back tea was ready. "Jolly nice little crib. You all alone here?" he said, as he looked round the little kitchen with its oak dresser, blue china, polished warming pans, blazing fire and steaming kettle.

"Yes," said Lady Moderna, pouring out his tea.

"By Jove! By the way—don't mind my asking—who are you?"

Lady Moderna blushed palpably. She had not before realized that she had invited a man to tea whose name was unknown to her.

"My name is Decadentia," she answered.

"I saw 'D' on your luggage when I helped to carry it up just now," he said.

"So good of you," murmured Lady Moderna.

"Then your father is Lord Demoralis-Le-Mond?"

"Yes."

"And you're Lady Moderna, the woman who writes jolly good verses?"

"Yes."

"You don't look it, by Jove!"

"What is your name?" asked Lady Moderna a little hurriedly.

"Lancelot—awfully rotten name. Always been ragged for it. Lancelot Ddoljambe, 205th Lancers. Quartered near here. Only joined yesterday."

"Oh! Then you were—" and then Lady Moderna stopped unaccountably.

"Yes," said Sir Lancelot. "I was—when I saw you on the top of the donkey cart and you left me in the mud." And then they both laughed with all the blessed joy of youth until the tears ran down their cheeks.

"You looked like a troubadour just now on the grass," said Lady Moderna, as she helped him to more Cape gooseberries.

"Let's see, troubadours were those Johnnies in the fourteenth century who

were always making love, weren't they?" queried Sir Lancelot.

"They wrote a good deal about it, I believe," said Lady Moderna demurely.

"Do writers understand what they write about?" queried Sir Lancelot, waxing bold under the influence of tea, cigarettes and the Simple Life. "You ought to know."

"It is difficult to be sure of things," said Lady Moderna elusively, "and I am sure Molly thinks she ought to be taken home before it gets dark."

"It's jolly rough on you being alone here," said Sir Lancelot, rising obediently. "I don't like to think of it."

"I shan't be alone tonight," said Lady Moderna with some exultation. "Old Daggs's daughter is coming to look after me."

"Don't swank," said Sir Lancelot; "there may be another swarm of bees. You may want me again."

"Yes, I may," said Lady Moderna.

When they went out to Molly they found the blackbird perched on Lancelot's saddle.

"Poor old duffer!" said Sir Lancelot, as he saw him vainly trying to fly away. "So she's clipped your wing, too, has she?"

The next morning Phyllis Daggs, radiant in clean cotton and coquettish streamers, brought in Lady Moderna's morning tea. Her bath stood in tempting array. Slippers and hot towels awaited her. In the kitchen burned a brilliant fire; the kettle steamed on the hob, and the hot plate in readiness banished for evermore the nightmares of her solitude.

An entry in her notebook—for future use in numbers—chronicled: "I sleep lulled to rest by the 'tu whit tu whoo' of baby owls and the pitter-patter of joyous squirrels on my humble roof. I eat my simple food (everything grilled) with the keenest appetite. I drink pure water drawn from my own well (also filtered). I have no thoughts but those inspired by the pure air and innocent employment. I inhale inspiration in every breeze. The scent of the pines intoxicates me. The perfume of my roses rises to my

brain. I live in a world of heavenly simplicity (near the camp) and enchantment." To her aunt, the Duchess, she wrote: "I am happy. I have so many friends here. Two robins, a field mouse, two squirrels and a blackbird with a wounded wing. He is very dear, but very greedy."

With the acumen of the proletariat,

Selina, Duchess of Conventionalis, who was of American extraction, pricked up her pretty ears.

"What about that blackbird with the game wing? Guess he's a stayer," she replied in a scrawl which would have disgraced an "extra lady."

She was right. He had been christened Lancelot.



THE VALE O' GLOAMIN'

By GORDON JOHNSTONE

A-WEARY drag the hours, an' me hope's a-wet with tears,
Mavourneen, roamin', an' do you think o' me,
Whin soft the mist a-fallin' brings you down remembered years
Upon a wisp o' mornin' across the moanin' sea?
For 'tis you that's far away,
But 'tis me that has to stay
Here a-livin' on the echo
O' your song o' yesterday!

Thin come to me in sorrow whin the dark is fallin' still,
Mavourneen, roamin', the nights are callin', too.
The thrush has found his dearie in the castle on the hill,
But cold me heart a-rovin' without the heart o' you;
And the moors, so bleak and sere,
Whisper down the yesteryear:
" 'Tis a-faint we are with waitin'
And a-longin' for you, dear."

Oh, say you'll come, Alanna, whin the flowers go to sleep,
Mavourneen, roamin', an' nestle on me breast,
An' put your arms around me as the ghosts o' shadows creep
From out the vale o' gloamin' where day has gone to rest,
And we'll hold each other fast,
In the clingin', clingin' past,
Though the dawn must wake and take you,
And the drame too sweet to last!



NO one has yet invented a tire that will keep the matrimonial car from skidding.

THE INTERESTING ENGLISHMAN

By CARL S. HANSEN

THAT interesting provincial international question, as to why so many American girls prefer to marry Englishmen, is being raised in London anent Gertrude Atherton's declaration that if she ever marries again she will marry an Englishman. As usual, local complacency has decided it to be because the home product has more domestic virtues.

As a man, I can't tell what the girl's preference should be; but as an American I can make a guess as to why an Englishman should interest an American girl when she stalks him in his native wilds.

The matter can certainly have nothing to do with breeding, for the American is not behind the Englishman in delicacy. A partisan of the American might fairly maintain his superiority in this respect; for the real Englishman, as I shall hint, is often unsparing of the feelings of others, while the real American would rather lose a tooth than speak a harsh word. It can have nothing to do with cosmopolitanism, if we mean by cosmopolitanism the urbanity which enables one to get on anywhere without friction, for in this the New Yorker can give the Londoner cards and spades and beat him out with one eye shut. Nor can it have anything to do with culture, for if we have any national vice it is culture.

Throw an American out of the window and he will land upon his feet, his hands doing something. Throw an Englishman out of the window and he will land on his hands, his mouth affirming things. Put both into a howling wilderness, and the American will have a city staked out while the Englishman is cleaning the mud off his

boots. Put both into a complex Mars, and the Briton will be running the new cosmos while the American is looking for the wire to introduce his telephone. The American's passion is for industry, the Englishman's for dominance; the American is an engineer, the Englishman a conductor.

This passion for controlling things, rather than doing them, touches every part of the Englishman's life. It is his opinion first, and something else next, that differentiates him from the American. We are orthodox in a negligible sort of way; but we are heterodox in a negligible sort of way, also. With us an opinion is nothing to make a fuss over; with an Englishman an opinion is always something to make a fuss over. As yet we are really an unopinionated people.

At the end of the day the New Yorker's brain is tired from work and he wants to be amused, while the Londoner, who hates work, and hasn't done anything, anyway, just begins to use his brains. The Londoner's brains are always saved for opinions—dogmas on how to run the cosmos. The Londoner's opinions make him democratic; the New Yorker's make him orthodox. The New Yorker offers you a cigar, the Londoner a pipe. On treading on your toes the New Yorker apologizes, "I beg your pardon!"—the Londoner bites off, "Sorry!" Morning, noon and night the Londoner dresses to please himself; morning, noon and night the New Yorker pleases to dress like everybody else. There is a type of the New Yorker; there are innumerable types of Londoners.

It is this unflagging zeal in opinions

that makes the Englishman interesting. Far from being a hidebound conservative, he is a democratic Socrates, often a nuisance, going the rounds to convert other people to his views. An American at a political gathering is either apathetic or wildly enthusiastic. The Englishman is never apathetic. He has a special character described by a word unknown to the American. It is the "heckler."

The "heckler" is a sort of anti-Greek chorus, who conspicuously "butts in" and consumes at least half the speaker's time. He stands right up in meeting and affirms a difference of opinion, point by point, with the speaker. When his breath gives out he shrieks, "Liar!" Shrieking "Liar!" over our way, would make the most august President we ever had peel off his coat; in England it ruffles nobody. The candidate who can't handle six "hecklers" at once, skillfully making them prove his argument, never reaches Parliament.

I cite these things to show that the Englishman is a lively fellow, living by opinions as we live by bread. An American will tell you according to Freitag why he likes a play, for it is part of our national culture to prove a play by Freitag; an Englishman cares no more for Freitag than for Confucius, and he will tell you about the play for himself.

Of course, there is a tremendous conservatism in England, as there is everywhere, but it is different from the American conservatism. The English conservative is a radical quite as much as his opponent. He wants to do things. He doesn't want to be let alone, as over our way. He wants to reform the whole world according to an iron rule, which is as radical a doctrine as any we know in America.

It is no more to the credit of the Londoner that he is opinionated than it is to the credit of the New Yorker that he is useful. Both are mere adaptations to special environments, for, at heart and bottom, their ideals and capacities are the same; they are twin brothers

in different lands. But the terrible contrast of classes in England, the ridiculous traditions of the Church, the worse than wretched divorce procedure, the conflict for and against poor laws and pensions, the silly censorship, the remnants of a bygone monarchical regime surviving in the House of Lords produce in politics, in philosophy, in religion, in art ten affirmations for every one in America. Hence the Englishman is interesting. He reads less than the American, but his atmosphere is more charged with dissent. It fills the radical with a new culture, that must some day become orthodox; it fills the conservative with a passion to reform things his way that makes him anything but a sleepy foggy. The Englishman is a dogmatist, working out at least his own salvation; and while a dogmatist may be a nuisance, he is seldom a bore.

So when the American girl has attained to the culture of forty years ago—the culture of the cultured world the world over—if she is a bit of an anarchist—and what brainy woman isn't?—and has been all but strangled by the conversation of her brother, who knows nothing beyond her own culture, there would seem every reason for her to be interested in the Englishman's views, with his strong positivism, his bluntness that refreshes, his candor that amazes, his everyday opinions which never mince matters. Her brother is a modest chap, with a good deal of tolerance about the thing he knows nothing of, but the Englishman, whether he knows it or not, proves it. This is the special charm of the Englishman—he makes you think. He is hospitable; he is a gracious host; he is a good fellow, and thoroughgoing—but so are other people; so are we. It is only when there's an opinion in the air—no matter what—that he brings in a flood of new ideas, together with his habit of positivism, and leaves the American miles behind. He's the product of the environment that will make for tomorrow's better democracy.

EN TÊTE-À-TÊTE

By IZOLA FORRESTER

FOR one instant she paused. Bertrand was a pace ahead, following the *maître d'hôtel*. In one vivid flash of comprehension she saw the great dining room, with its crowded tables, its mellow glow of shaded golden light from myriads of opalescent globes half hidden in palms and greenery. Above her head in the balcony they were just striking the first chords of "O, Celeste Aida." For an instant Philippa paused, with half-shut eyes, her lips parted, letting the whole scene enthrall her senses. The music, the fragrance of the flowers on the tables, the faint, intoxicating perfume that seemed to steal over all, as if it were the very emanation of femininity *en fête*, even the odor of an after-dinner cigar or cigarette here and there, lent to the *ensemble* a sort of Eastern touch of haunting beauty.

After five years it was just the same; thank God, it was just the same! She could have laughed like a child, laughed aloud before them all, and she stretched out her arms in yearning welcome, so glad she was after the horrors and changes of her own life to find this, that had been her dearest memory of life, unchanged.

Bertrand smiled at her as she took her seat.

"It's the same table. Remember?"

"Remember? Don't." She closed her eyes for a moment. Almost the happy tears filled them. Bertrand shook his head at her in the old whimsical, laughing way.

"Keep your sense of humor. You've won out. What is lacking?"

"It isn't that. It's because there is

nothing lacking—now. What time did you get my message?"

"It was waiting for me when I came in from lunch. I was awfully glad to hear from you. Where the devil did that waiter go?"

She drew off her gloves so quickly that one seam ripped, and crushed the soft *suède* in her hot, tense hands. He had pushed back her white chiffon veil in the cab, in that swift, brief moment when they had whirled out of the arc of light at the station and into the darkness of a side street. Oddly enough, as he had crushed her to him, she had laughed at his impatient ejaculation over the intervening barrier of gauze between their lips. He had pushed it back half roughly from her face and kissed her, and all the while she was thinking not of the kiss, but that she was glad the first kiss after five years had happened in the dark. If she had changed any to him, at least, for the moment, he would not realize it. Then, as he had released her, she leaned back with a little unsteady laugh. Five years of longing for that first kiss, and she had been thinking of something else while it was happening! She glanced sideways at the shadowy profile beside her, and wondered whether he, too, had been thinking of something else.

There was small chance for evading the results of the five years as she faced him now, but the rose shades on the little globes at their table were kind to her. If the shadows beneath the gray eyes were accentuated, at least she could have assured him it was not from weeping. She was not one to whom tears came as a relief. Night

after night she had sat alone before her brooding fire, staring down at it, dreaming, hoping for this hour, praying that when the time of fulfillment was granted her she might find it unchanged.

"When did you hear of his death?"

Bertrand asked the question almost brutally. Instead of shrinking or wincing before the uncompromising truth, she met his gaze almost curiously. She had expected him to handle the matter of Frank's death with a better touch than that, for her sake, at least. Even though she had not seen or heard from him in two years, the decencies were there to be observed tacitly, not for the sake of the man who lay dead these twelve months and over, but for her own. Yet she answered the question with the same bare truthfulness. It seemed to be the only way to do.

"A year ago."

"Why didn't you send for me then?"

"I did not want to see you."

"You always want to see me."

She laughed at the dogged masterfulness in his tone.

"Oh, but I do not—not always. You require environment to accentuate your special loveliness."

"What did it matter whether you sent for me the day after he died or the year after, as long as you needed me? Confound the decencies! You had not seen him in how long?"

"I saw him last five years ago, the night after I dined with you here. I told him the truth—"

"All of it?"

"Nearly." The color rose delicately in her cheeks. "He wrote to me once afterward, when he met with the motor accident at Mayence. He thought he was going to die."

"Why did he write then—to forgive you?"

"No." She leaned a trifle forward, her hands clasped lightly before her, but her face was turned away from him, up toward the screened orchestra in the balcony. "He told me he hoped I would find happiness and—marry the man I loved."

There was a pause. His voice recalled her abruptly.

"You don't care for caviare, do you, dear?"

She smiled gravely at him over the utter incongruity of the query, also at his memory of her taste, even in caviare. What a materialist he was, after all! They had not met in five years, yet after that kiss back in the cab, that kiss which had bridged the years in one swift minute, he could waste the precious time lingering over the menu with the waiter! As though she cared for one instant what they should eat! She wanted to talk to him, to tell him some of the thoughts that had surged through her mind those lonely nights when she had waited for her release from Frank. She wanted him to question her, to scold her, to show her that he still cared, and he lingered like any other New York gourmet over the special entrées of the evening. Her very glance seemed to rest on him caressingly. His head was half turned from her, and bowed over the pad in the waiter's hand. She loved his hair, the thick, crisp brownness of it, even the little places at the side that showed a tinge of gray. Back there, at her home in the South, she had often closed her eyes and tried to recall just his head, just the dark sweep of hair up from his temples and the keen, clear, dark eyes that half closed when he laughed.

When the waiter had gone with their order he met her gaze, soft with retrospection, and smiled at her appreciatively.

"Why didn't you send for me before?"

"I don't know." She hesitated slightly, a frown drawing her straight, dark brows closer. "I wanted to—oh, but I did want to! It almost made me afraid when I found how dependent I was on you for life's happiness."

Her tone was so low he could hardly catch it.

"Yet you wasted the years for us both."

"Oh, I knew you would always be here when I wanted you."

He laughed at the childlike *naïveté* with which she made the confession of her faith in him.

"Well—I am here."

"Yes, and I feel the same now as I did back there in Georgia, when I would write letters to you and tear them up, for fear you might read them and know." She looked away from him quickly, and drew in a deep breath of contentment. "Isn't it good, that after so long a time one can come back and find it the same? I think that was what I have been afraid of, that it would never be the same."

"I told you, no matter how long the time might be, I would come when you sent for me, didn't I?"

"Oh, I don't mean you, dear. I know you could not change. It was myself I feared. You don't know how much it means to me, the visible, the actual part of our happiness. I love environment. I love to go back to a place where I have found supreme joy, and find it unchanged. Back there in Georgia there was one clump of pines. They grew tall and straight down there, with the branches way up near the tops like palms, and under them the passion flowers grew. Have you ever seen them? They are like this." She took her oyster fork and traced a delicate vine along the table cloth. "All along the road and over the rocks, dear, and down the end of the road, the sea beating up on the beach. It used to call and call to me. Do you know what it says?"

He shook his head, smiling across at her. She was still the child in her moods, and he had always loved them and humored her.

"When it breaks on the sand, it says, '*Je t'aime*,' soft, just like that, and at night, when it throws itself on the rocks under my windows, it would shriek it out at me, '*Je t'aime*.' Don't you dare interrupt me to ask what I want to eat, you bear! Aren't you glad I'm here?"

"Glad?" he repeated. "If I had a prayer rug handy you would see me down on my knees, beating my scalplock in the direction of Mecca from

sheer gratefulness. I can see you down in that heaven-forsaken land, trying to get up courage to come North to me, and eating out your heart, you poor, brave love of mine."

"Can you really?" She dimpled at him charmingly. "Then you are an utter failure as a clairvoyant, for I did nothing of the sort."

"You did. You waited and waited, and tried to make yourself believe you could live without me, and you failed!" The sheer braggadocio of egoism in his words sent the color to her face, but there was an elusive smile on her lips as she turned her head away again toward the music.

"Why did you go off down there?" he demanded suddenly. "Were you afraid that I would try to find you? Didn't you know that if I had desired to, I would have brought you back from any spot on earth?"

"Would you, dear? Woof!" She bent toward him with swift, low laughter. "Heap big Injun chief! Oh, Jack, Jack, why on earth don't some of you sons of God, who stalk us yet as fair game, do something besides talk? You are always going to do such mighty deeds when you love. And you stamp and you swear and you kick the stars and bite the dust and growl real fiercely, don't you, dearie?"

"You would have come to me any time I had asked you to."

"Would I? Why?"

"Because you could not have helped yourself. Mine is the stronger will."

"Then why did you not send?"

"I wanted you to act freely. I did not want you ever to regret the coming."

"Well, I have come now."

She leaned one hand on her finger tips and met his gaze squarely.

"What is next? I have imagined this far over and over again, just how we two should meet after all these years, just how you would hold me close, just how you would kiss me; and always I dreamed of our coming back here to this corner of light and perfume and melody. And here I hesitate. What next?"

Bertrand's hand closed over hers as it lay on the table between them.

"You will do what he told you to, marry the man you love and find happiness."

"If one were sure—"

"Of me?"

"No, no; of myself." He released her hand at the approach of the waiter. During the changing of the courses he talked of general topics, of people and happenings he thought would interest her. She listened idly at first, her mind intent on the music, thinking his talk merely a subterfuge before the waiter, but suddenly she found herself listening to him.

He had always been a good talker. That gift had first attracted her to him. His breadth of view, his keen, optimistic philosophy, his close contact and fellowship with the world of everyday affairs back in the old days had all proven irresistible. Her husband was a man of the times, clever, famous in his own profession; but in spite of all his cleverness, he had failed to catch the point of view, the "itness of things," as Bertrand called it, that intangible sixth sense in man or woman that places them *en rapport* with their hour and their world. Bertrand had possessed the gift to a wonderful extent. Apparently merely an onlooker at life in general, he was a master of direction, a man whose opinion went far toward shaping the trend of current events; and this power she had loved in him in the past quite as much as his personality.

But tonight she caught a curious difference. He had always talked to her freely. Now she detected some new quality in his tone and words, something she could hardly name, even to herself. He was harder, more pessimistic, cynical, unsparing, as he sketched briefly for her the drift of life as he had seen it since their parting.

"Are you tired of it all?" she asked him.

"Tired? I should say not!" He laughed at her good-humoredly. "Why?"

"I don't know, only—you're different."

"So are you."

She leaned toward him, her eyes wistful and disappointed.

"Am I? I didn't know I was. What is it, I wonder? Is everything unchanged excepting you and me, dear? That was why I waited and waited. Don't you know it was better to hold to a memory like ours than to seek the reality again and find it changed?"

"I don't know anything about it." He moved aside his plate and took a cigarette from his case. "May I smoke?"

"Smoke after I have gone, if you like." She was still smiling at him, her eyes full of amused tenderness, as one would gaze at a willful boy.

He held the unlighted cigarette half raised.

"You're not going anywhere away from me tonight."

"Dear, I shall take the first train back to Georgia as soon as you have finished your *demi-tasse*."

"I don't understand you. What have I done? I've waited for five years until you were ready to send for me. You sent tonight, and I am here. We shall be married inside of an hour. Why did you come North and send for me, if you did not mean just that?"

She watched the waiter prepare their *café du diable* at a side table, and avoided his glance. It was a thing spectacular, that ceremony. Five years before she had watched it, and laughed over the snapdragon effect of the leaping blue and gold flames in the great gold-lined bowl. Now she set the slender flagon down beside her untasted. Somehow, it seemed typical of her longing to see him again. All these years it had burned like a sacrificial light on the altar of her heart, a secret fire tended by her alone. It had made life worth living. Back at her home in Georgia she had met each sunrise with thanksgiving, believing it brought her nearer to this hour.

And now— She sighed and drew on her gloves slowly.

"Everything is the same, excepting

you and me, dear. And we cannot help that, can we? I came North just to see you again, to be sure I loved you. And I do not. Wait, please," as he started to interrupt. "It isn't your fault, at all. I think I have changed, myself. I knew when you kissed me that it was too late. And we do not want to hold out our hands for warmth over a dead fire, do we?"

"You shall not go back there, Philippa!"

"Hush!" She put out her hand across the table with impulsive pity. "There, there, I didn't mean for you to grip it and crush it so. People will see you. Button it, goose. I can't with the other on."

She smiled down at his head as he obeyed. It was strange. She could look at the old familiar sweep of hair without a tremor, without even the impulse to lay her cheek against it.

"Jack, dear, I'm afraid you are your own antidote," she said softly. "Hurry. There is a train at ten forty-five."

"You won't have time to make it, change your baggage and get your ticket." He spoke doggedly, but with a ray of last hope at the delay. "If you wait until tomorrow you'll change your mind. Philippa, wait."

She laughed and rose. Up in the balcony they were playing something from Debussy, a wailing, weird harmony of crashing chords and delicate, elfin interludes.

"Isn't that Melisande at the tower," she asked, lifting her chin in the old quick way—"where she lets down her hair for Pelleas to kiss?"

"I don't know—and I don't care. Will you wait until tomorrow?"

"I cannot," she told him softly. "I have a return ticket, dear."



LOVE (IN A PARENTHESIS)

By JOHN K. LeBARON

IN our little boat
We drift and float
Under the sheltering trees,
And I feel the flush
Of her cheek's warm blush,
As it's kissed (by the passing breeze).

In our little canoe
That was built for two,
Just two and not any more,
We loaf and love
(The stars above)
As we hug and hug (the shore).



THERE is but one virtue, and that is moderation.

MODERN IRONY

By LESLIE N. CURTIS

A WOMAN of Great Gifts ventured into the world to win fame at any cost save chastity.

Laden with youth, hope and the will of inexperience, she passed from the Valley of Simple Joys through the Gates of Obscurity, lightened her once joyous burden in the Lane of Lost Ideals, and rested her bruised feet on the Hill of Infinite Loneliness.

Caught in the Maelstrom of Ceaseless Endeavor, she came unheralded into the City of Men. Vainly she knocked at the Door of Opportunity. Beauty and Dulled Sensibility—armed with the key of Influence—passed readily through the Portals of Alpha, but the Door of Opportunity closed with a hopeless clang on the Woman of Great Gifts. She had no key save Merit. Despair and Starvation crouched beside her on the doorstep. Temptation in a touring car pointed meaningly at the closed door. She cursed him and clung closer to her gaunt companions. Death sharpened his sickle and passed the tip to a friendly undertaker.

Presto! A stray song winged its way into the heart of a Power. Popularity and Success knocked at the Shelter of Lost Hopes. Youth and Prosperity healed the sick soul of the Woman. Comfort and Luxury sat by her fireside, while Hunger and Cold sneaked out the back way to join Failure and Distress in the Alley of Dissolution.

The Motley Multitude arrived to pay tribute to the fair protégée of Fame.

Said the Fool: "Your luck is phenomenal!"

Said the Wise: "Unusually fine personality!"

Said the Frivolous: "Your beauty exceeds all else!"

Said the Sensual: "What capacity for love!"

Said the Pious: "Such knowledge is unseemly!"

Said the Worldly: "Life has given you understanding!"

Said the Poor: "Charity becomes you!"

Said the Rich: "Your simplicity is charming!"

Said the Cynic: "Unusual brain for such a beauty!"

And the Woman of Great Gifts, standing alone on the Height of Achievement, gazed backward through the smoked glasses of Memory to the peaceful Valley of Simple Joys, retraversed the Highway of Hard Knocks and the lane of Lost Ideals and crept slowly through the Field of Futile Sacrifice to the Hill of Infinite Loneliness. She smiled wearily and said: "Yet the most precious of my possessions you have not named. A pearl of great price preserved at great price—Virtue!"

A strained silence fell upon the Motley Multitude. Some smiled; others said, "Impossible!" and not one believed her!



HOPE is expecting something we know won't happen.

THE PARSON AND THE PICK-POCKET

By KATHARINE H. WRENSHALL

IT was the second day out from Liverpool. The tarpaulins stretched along the dripping rails crackled with the wind; the big ship plunging through the waves rose and rolled; the girders creaked and moaned; the water gurgled in the scuppers; but the Widow sat in her deck chair absorbed in her book.

A fellow passenger standing near was watching her profile, unconscious that he was being studied closely by the Parson, until turning, he met the old man's kind blue eyes.

"She is charming," he said.

The Rev. Mr. Goodheart smiled. "Yes, blessed with the power to make all the world love her. No, not I," he hastily deprecated; "I am too old for that, but I have found her a sympathetic listener to my anxiety over my daughter, who is desperately ill in New York."

"What is the nature of your daughter's illness?"

"I do not know. The cable said: 'Come; desperately ill,' and I took this steamer, fortunately a moderately fast one." Doctor Mervin relighted his cigarette, leading the conversation to other things to distract Mr. Goodheart's thoughts, until the sound of their voices penetrated the Widow's abstraction, and she looked up with a smile.

The men, approaching, drew chairs close to hers.

"You are a veritable sea witch, Mrs. Patterson. It is so rough and stormy

that everyone is ill but the Doctor, you and myself."

"Here comes another not ill," and she glanced at a man lighting his cigar in the shelter of the tarpaulin.

"I heard that his name was Craig when I was in the smoking room last night."

"You speak as if you did not like him, Doctor Mervin."

"No," decidedly answered the Doctor, "no, I do not. He scrutinized everyone in the smoking room and especially their watches." The Widow laughed, but Mr. Goodheart clapped his hand to his watch pocket. "Doctor Mervin, you make me quite nervous; it would grieve me to lose mine."

"A good opportunity, Mr. Goodheart, for you to make a convert. Surely you could bring him to a state of grace by the time we reach New York."

The Widow was laughing, but the Parson shook his head in gentle reproof. "Do not jest, my child, upon such a subject. But your thought is excellent, though given so lightly and frivolously. I will act upon it."

The three watched Craig stroll toward them. The man was not displeasing in appearance, but the Widow looked out to sea and the Parson was busy with his cuff links when the Doctor supplied the match Craig asked for. Craig having walked on some distance, the two looked at the Widow, whose pale cheeks were flaming.

"I never was so rude in my life to anyone; I am ashamed."

THE PARSON AND THE PICKPOCKET

"It was your prerogative, my dear Mrs. Patterson, not to speak," soothed the Parson.

"I don't care; I was rude, and it was your fault." She turned stormy eyes upon the Doctor, who smiled aggravatingly, she considered. "I have half a mind to make you go and talk to him and then introduce him to me."

"I will, instead." The Parson rose and left the two, who from the first had seemed to fancy each other.

The ship passing out of the galeswept Irish sea, the sick passengers emerged, and the three had no further uninterrupted conversation. Doctor Mervin and the Widow had become absorbed in each other, and Mr. Goodheart did not appear to seek any opportunity to talk to them, though his mild glance would reprove their evident amusement when he passed with Craig, his boon companion of the trip, while at the same moment he would furtively clutch his watch fob to show them he still had his cherished possession.

The last night before landing the usual coast fog wrapped the decks, but the Doctor and the Widow sat in their favorite corner, with chairs drawn close, and the Captain smoking near smiled at the insistent tones of Doctor Mervin.

"Dearest, don't you think you could say 'Yes' before we leave the dear old ship?"

The Captain did not hear her answer. Mr. Goodheart's voice drifted through the fog.

"I will hope to meet you again, my dear young friend, for the hours we have spent together have been delightful. Indeed, I feel I have learned much from you, for you have a rare and unusual knowledge for one so young. My card? Surely; and yours? Thank you; I will place it in my Bible, for it has been a privilege to meet one with so much insight and knowledge combined with the rare respect you have manifested for all things sacred, a delight to one traveling through the forests of earthly indifference. Good night; we shall meet tomorrow for an hour."

"Good night, Mr. Goodheart." Henry

Craig's silky voice caressed the words, and the Doctor's hand tightened on the Widow's, as he murmured: "That is surely the voice of a scamp." As he spoke the Parson appeared on the deck, still smiling. He hastened to the corner where he knew the two were.

"Ah, Doctor, such an estimable young man! And you two have jested."

"No, no, Mr. Goodheart."

"Yes, you have, my little lady, you both—" He suddenly gasped and rocked where he stood, his hand on his watch pocket, and the Doctor cried out: "It is gone!" But the Widow, flinging her rug aside, had left her chair. For one second her slim figure was silhouetted against the lighted doorway: the next the two astonished men could hear her talking to Craig. Striding to the porthole, they could see her standing between Craig and the staircase, her furs slipping from her shoulders, falling half across the top step; and surmising that she would hold him from going below with his spoil, Doctor Mervin turned to consult with the Parson on the surest way to recover the watch. But he was talking with the Captain.

"You say you have been all evening with this man, your close companion of the trip?"

"Yes, Captain." Mr. Goodheart's pleasant affability was broken with ripples of agitation.

The Captain looked sharply at his benign and gentle face, then at the Doctor standing near. "Where is Mrs. Patterson?" he demanded.

"Holding Craig at the head of the companionway," answered the Doctor, and in spite of his vexation, the Captain smiled as he looked through the porthole before he joined the couple within.

"We shall be at the wharf very early, Mrs. Patterson. Are your trunks ready?"

"No, indeed; I am going now to finish my packing." She moved to the door with a parting bow to Craig.

"Allow me to fold your rugs," exclaimed Craig, hastening forward, as though he divined the trap closing upon him.

"The Doctor is on deck, Mr. Craig; he will fold Mrs. Patterson's rugs," interrupted the Captain in a stern voice. "And I wish to speak to you for a moment."

Craig looked desperately at the open door, but he submitted to the officer's detaining hand on his arm.

"I have had a conversation, Mr. Craig, that has annoyed me greatly. An accusation has been made against one of my passengers; perhaps you can aid me." The Captain spoke low and persuasively, but Craig looked steadily at the letter rack.

"I regret I do not catch the drift of your words, Captain—but I was always a dull fellow."

"I will be clearer, Mr. Craig. I am due on the bridge shortly, and I should like to know just how many minutes I have for my cigar before going up." Drawing one from its case and a match from his pocket, he waited.

"I will not light this if I cannot smoke it to the end. I am sure—I am sure that you must have a—watch."

The last word was jerked out by the Captain as though he found it most distasteful, and Craig started nervously, for simultaneously the Parson appeared in the doorway.

"Come in, Mr. Goodheart; Mr. Craig is just going to give me the time."

The Parson assented, his gentle face lighted with eagerness.

"Here it is," slowly muttered Craig, and he held out the old watch, the dull silver shining under the electric lights. The Captain silently handed it to the Parson, who clasping his beloved trinket, faced Craig.

"I regret that I cannot at this moment find sufficient grace to thank you for returning my watch, or wish to continue our acquaintance. Good evening." And turning, he went immediately to the Doctor and the Widow waiting on the deck.

"I am so agitated," he moaned. "Do strike a match, Doctor; I wish to look at my loved possession. Alas, that old as I am, my soul should still hold such earthly feelings!"

Under the flaring match the watch

was turned to and fro; then Mr. Goodheart turned to the Widow.

"How am I ever to express to you my appreciation for your wit and courage?"

"Don't try," she laughed; "but sit down here and rest." The Parson placed his watch in his pocket, tucked in the fob and sank back in the offered chair with an exhausted sigh. The two looked at him curiously, but the Widow restrained her desire to tease, and the Doctor laid his hand quietly on the Parson's, expecting the rapid pulse that raced beneath his fingers.

"Pray, allow me to give you something tonight. I never offer to prescribe, but you seem to feel this affair so keenly that I think it my duty to advise your taking a very mild sedative."

"Yes, do take what the Doctor offers you," urged the Widow.

"Are you going to take *all* his doses, my little lady?"

"Yes, surely, if I decide to have him for my physician." Mr. Goodheart looked at the Doctor, but his eyes were on the demure face beside him.

"May I offer my warmest congratulations and wishes, my friends?"

"Thank you, sir." The Doctor spoke heartily, but the Widow, laying her hand lightly in the Parson's clasp, rose and slipped away. Mr. Goodheart immediately reverted to Craig.

"I am so shocked and grieved over this affair; Craig had impressed me favorably. And such a habit!"

Doctor Mervin's eyebrows went up at the added word, and the other explained.

"I cannot call it a vice; it must be a habit. Indeed, I did wrong to feel such displeasure. I must endeavor to repair it."

"He has probably gone down now to his stateroom, but you will have time tomorrow and then again on the wharf. Don't worry; he is a scamp. Be glad you have your watch safe. Certainly you were most restrained in what would have been natural anger when he gave it up."

"I am glad you think so, Doctor, but

I fear I am acquiring an irritable manner in my old age."

"Not so, Mr. Goodheart, not so; come down now. See that flashlight out there on the coast! It is spelling: 'Buffalo, Chicago and all points West.'"

Mr. Goodheart walked slowly to the door, and the Doctor, gathering up the rugs, leisurely followed, when glancing through the porthole, he saw the Parson and Craig talking, the former protesting with mild vigor:

"I cannot believe it, I will not believe it, that you are a professional thief, with such intelligence, a good education, and"—Mr. Goodheart hesitated—"with such excellent respect for the church."

"But it takes a man with some wit to steal and not be caught," growled Craig.

"My boy, I cannot think it to be a confirmed evil with you; indeed, I refuse to—no, not if you took my watch again! Surely, it is an unfortunate—ahem! Did you ever have brain fever?"

"No," laughed Craig.

"How sad! And you really acknowledge this—ahem—lamentable tendency of yours to be frequent?"

"Very frequent, Mr. Goodheart." And Craig laughed again. The old man clasped his hands and almost wrung them at the other's levity, but he spoke mildly.

"I am a poor man, Mr. Craig, yet I will gladly give you a temporary loan to start you if you will promise to cease this wickedness."

"Can't promise that, Mr. Goodheart; temptation might prove too strong—but by gosh, sir, you must have a mighty trusting disposition to offer me a loan."

"My disposition has nothing to do with the matter, young man; I would save you if I could."

"You mean you would save your watch—in short, buy me off."

The old Parson stepped back, looking doubtfully and sadly at Craig.

"Respect my sacred calling, if you do not my gray hair," he said sternly, and after a moment Craig apologized.

"Forgive my seeming disrespect, Mr. Goodheart."

"Oh, my boy, I do forgive most truly, for it grieves me deeply to think of your future; let me, I beseech you, have the humble gratification of knowing that I have influenced your conduct. Think of how you must answer for all these delinquencies, and pray for strength to combat such tendencies. Here is a little pamphlet, my son; you will see I have marked it for my own benefit during this trying voyage to my daughter's deathbed. Take it; perhaps there may come a moment when you would like to look at it."

Mr. Goodheart, putting the pamphlet into Craig's hand, turned to the door. "Are you coming, Doctor?" And the Doctor emerging from the gloom, they went down the companionway together.

As the liner entered New York harbor the waters were shining in the sunlight, and the Doctor and the Widow leaning over the rail watched the ships and the tug that, having brought the customs officials, screeched itself hoarse and departed; then the two seated themselves in their favorite corner, looking after the Parson where he strolled along the decks.

That the Widow was still uncertain in her answer was evidenced by the pucker between the Doctor's brows, and Parson and Pickpocket faded from his mind as he looked at her. Her cheeks were pink with the sea air, and happiness possibly had added the smiling brilliance to her eyes, but she sat silent until suddenly she exclaimed, "Look!" and the Doctor turning, saw Mr. Goodheart and Craig at the gangway. The latter was shaking hands effusively with the Parson, for at the old man's earnest request no charges had been preferred, and Henry Craig was the first passenger ashore, the pamphlet sticking out of his pocket. Doctor Mervin, pointing it out, told his companion of the last incident of the previous evening, and she laughed, but her eyes suddenly filled with tears, and the Doctor took them as an evil omen for his hopes, his heart sinking lower

and lower as later he waited near when her trunks were examined on the wharf.

She seemed absolutely shy of him, until at a sudden crowding on the wharf she retreated hastily to his side. A police wagon had been driven through the gates and the crowd ordered back.

"What is the matter?"

"Some poor devil caught breaking the laws, I expect."

"I hope it is no one from our ship," she breathed.

"They're arrestin' a first class passenger," yelled an immigrant from the decks of the liner.

"Yah! Yah!" Yells and hisses filled the air, and a policeman waving his baton hurried up the gangway. "Shut up," he cried, and as he stepped on the deck he added, "Get back."

The immigrants laughed, but someone on the wharf protested loudly, while a woman's voice cried out: "Poor dear gentleman, what an indignity!" "It's a mistake, I tell you," shouted a man, and the Doctor swung the Widow up onto a dry goods box. Once she could see over the crowd, she scrambled down panting. "Oh, Bob, we must go to him!" and she vanished through the crowd, followed by the Doctor.

In the center of a small space kept open by the police was a marshal, a warrant in his hand; to one side waited a silent, motionless prisoner between two officers.

Instinctively understanding, though not formulating his surmise, the Doctor stepped hastily into the circle of police surrounding the marshal and his prisoner.

"I will go his bail, marshal," he said

authoritatively. The officer shook his head, but at the Doctor's look of protest he silently passed his hand into his inner vest pocket. For one brief second the Doctor and the Widow saw a sickeningly familiar old silver watch. A spring threw the back open; the works were out, and a mass of diamonds glittered in their place.

"It must be a cruel mistake," she protested. The police smiled at her faith, but the marshal answered sternly:

"He is the greatest diamond thief in the world, madam."

"But he asked the Captain to let Henry Craig go after he had taken his horrid old watch from him," Mrs. Patterson expostulated.

"Henry Craig knew what was in the watch, madam, but the prisoner was the cleverer of the two and the more daring. He must have known that Craig was on his track, and to rid himself of him he allowed him first to steal the watch."

With a despairing little gesture Mrs. Patterson accepted the marshal's words and the Doctor led her away. As she paused at her trunks to receive the checks for them from the waiting baggage agent, she raised her head and dabbed angrily at her tears.

"How could anyone know if the minister was really a true one?"

"Oh, I know one who is very real, dearest, both as man and minister—one I can vouch for, as he is my own brother living here in New York. We will go by way of his rectory."

The Widow declared she would not, but she stepped into the carriage that the Doctor called.



THOUGH Hope is naught but an oft convicted liar, yet she hath such a sweet voice that whenever she speaks, all the world willingly lends an ear.



THE shiftless man is always religious—he lets God take care of his family.

THE VACATIONER'S VADE-MECUM

By STUART B. STONE

RENO—A Western resort much affected by the Eastern smart set and by sports and athletes from all over the world. Scenery cosmetic and peroxidic. A delightful spot to rusticate and rid oneself of physical afflictions and encumbrances. The most extreme cases cured in six months—some in fifteen rounds. No place for children.

LEAVENWORTH—A breezy, mid-West resort of increasing popularity with bankers, trust presidents and frenzied financiers. Hotel de Barz, erected by the Federal Government for the accommodation of the super-acquisitive, the finest institution of its kind west of Atlanta. Special suites reserved for long-term parties.

PITTSBURG—The site of the famous Councilmanic Immunity Baths. This popular resort is sometimes designated as Hell-With-the-Lid-Off. Visitors during the coming season will be afforded the rare spectacle of witnessing the adjustment of the lid into place.

ROME—An Italian watering place, once famous as the City of Seven Hills, but of late best known as the City of Incidents. A place of growing popularity among American statesmen and lion hunters. Send for free booklet: "When in Rome Do as Your Uncle Charley Does," by Fairbanks.

NEW YORK—A stratified, gilded city situated just east of the United States, and populated by deportation of the European surplus. Send for F. Hopkinson Smith's dainty brochure: "The Polite New Yorker—Where Is It?"

ATLANTIC CITY—The home of the famous boardwalk peach, famed for its exquisite coloring, bloom and curves. Scenery ranging from sylphlike to beefy. The celebrated outdoor art gallery is viewed by hundreds of thousands of inland critics annually.



SPENDING money is like sliding downhill on a toboggan; earning it is like walking up and pulling the toboggan after you. Guess which is best for the legs and wind.

HYMEN À LA MODE

By MARY L. PENDERED

MRS. MURRAY MACDONALD, charming, pretty, a finished product of West End modiste and beauty doctor, has just met after twenty years her first love, Major St. Quintain, a well-groomed, handsome man of forty-five. They are seated *tête-à-tête* at a small table under the trees in Lord Westbury's garden by the river. Other guests are gathered about in groups by the croquet lawns and near the refreshment tables.

SHE (*with a tender glance*)

Is it really so long as that? I can hardly believe how the time has flown.

HE

For you, perhaps. You are one of Time's petted favorites, and he has treated you gently. To me it seems an age. (*Impressively.*) So much has happened.

SHE

Yes, indeed; with me also. (*She sighs softly.*)

HE

Fate was not kind to us, Rose. When I look back— (*The pause is emphatic.*)

SHE (*with a laugh*)

It certainly seems, on looking back, that we were sport for the ironic gods! To think that you and I, who were parted for one sole reason, the lack of any prospect to marry on, should both have become wealthy when it was too late! If we could only have foreseen!

HE (*somewhat irritably*)

How could one possibly foresee such absolutely unexpected and unlikely contingencies? My uncle and cousin were both in the prime of health, and

your godmother never seemed to take the faintest interest in you. I was amazed when I heard on my arrival in England that she had left you all her money. What made her do it?

SHE

Oh, a freak! She wanted to spite her relations, who worried her continually. Lucky for me! If only I had known beforehand what a difference it would have made in my life!

HE (*gloomily*)

And now it is too late.

SHE

Don't look so tragic, Sholto. That face belongs to twenty years ago, and doesn't suit you a bit now. Honestly, confess you are content with things as they are. It's no good saying you aren't. Everything about you breathes prosperity and an agreeable existence.

HE (*with a short laugh*)

Agreeable enough. One must make the best of things, and given a decent income and fair health, one should be able to avoid disagreeables.

SHE

Exactly. I, too, do not find life unendurable. After all, it is never anything but compromise with one's ideals.

HE

And you are married! Happy man! I wonder if he appreciates his good fortune? I suppose you believe yourself to be as much in love with him as you once believed yourself to be with me!

SHE

Don't be horrid. Do you think that kind of thing ever comes twice? I like my husband, of course, very much, or I should not have married him. He is really quite a nice chap and a good sportsman—you'll get on with him. But when I look back—(*An impressive pause.*) Your wife is very pretty, I've heard.

HE

She is considered so, and, of course, I admire her, or I should not have married her. But when I see you again—(*Another impressive pause.*)

SHE (*pensively*)

You must find me dreadfully altered.

HE

I do not see the slightest change. You look exactly as you looked twenty years ago—except that your beauty has become refined; your figure is more elegant.

SHE

Oh, Sholto, absurd! How can a woman of forty look like a girl of twenty?

HE

You are the only woman I have ever known who would admit her real age.

SHE (*playfully*)

Juggins! What would be the use of trying to conceal it from you, who know my age to a day? Do you think I proclaim it to the world? I own to thirty-three, if pushed into a corner; but I believe my husband thinks me over thirty-five.

HE

He might well believe you to be twenty-five.

SHE (*laughing*)

As if my dear kind friends would let him! But, joking apart, Sholto, to be quite frank with you, I feel sometimes as if I am getting almost middle-aged. You see, Murray is so tremendously vitalized. He can never be quiet for half an hour. If he is not golfing or fishing or shooting, he has to be tearing all over the country in his motor. He will sit up all night, and night after night, playing bridge, then rush us off

to the other side of nowhere before lunch next morning. Never seems to turn a hair after the most tremendous orgies! And he's one of the few really dancing men, positively untirable! Scotch blood, you know. To see him dance a reel is actually exhausting to the beholder. He wears me out.

HE

You should resist. Why not let him go his own way while you take life easily?

SHE (*hesitatingly*)

Oh, well, you see, it doesn't do to drop out of everything, does it? I like a certain amount of excitement myself. Of course, we go our own ways to some extent, but (*laughing*) I don't want him to get quite out of hand, you know. I shouldn't mind the racket so much—the late nights and early mornings—if it didn't spoil one's complexion.

HE (*gallantly*)

Nothing could spoil yours. As I remember you at twenty your color was a little too high. You were a red tulip then, very glowing and beautiful, but lacking in the exquisite peachbloom tints which—

SHE (*interrupting him, with a smile*)

Now that will do, Sholto. It is very nice of you to pretend, but you are too much a man of the world, even if you *have* lived half your life abroad, not to know where I get my exquisite peachbloom tints. I wonder what we modern women would do without our beauty specialists? Life is so much more strenuous now than it was in our mothers' day. I have been motored half over England this year, in all weathers, and not under glass, either! I need scarcely explain that this does not conduce to peach tints. Is your wife fond of motoring?

HE

She is fond of everything that takes her out of the house. She is never in it. I believe she'd die of *ennui* if she had to spend a single quiet evening. We drop into two or three places every night, and she likes me to ride with her

on fine mornings before breakfast. Think of it, Rose—before breakfast! Some fool has told her it is good for the complexion, and she's mad on outdoor exercise, anyhow. The miles I've tramped with her over golf links would cover this country from Land's End to John O'Groat's! And I don't believe she knows what it is to feel tired.

SHE

Like Murray.

HE

Precisely. So, you see, I can sympathize with you.

SHE

And I with you. What a pity they didn't marry each other, instead of us! They would have suited one another to a T.

HE

Oh, don't speak of that—it won't bear thinking of. (*A short silence.*)

HE (*with emotion*)

Rose, when I recall those old days—how passionately I wanted you and longed for you—I can hardly believe that we have been parted twenty years; it seems like yesterday. And I am as sure now as I was then that we were made for one another. Do you remember the last night—when we swore—eternal fidelity in the garden? (*He laughs a little unsteadily.*)

SHE

Could I ever forget it? That dear old summerhouse—how earwiggy it was! And how we loved it, earwigs and all! The nightingale was singing—do you remember that, I wonder?—until we were half mad with its passion and our own pain. You said: "Darling, I will never give you up. Be true to me a few years—they will soon go"; and I swore I would wait forever. Oh, how it all comes back! And what idiotic young fools we were!

(*Her voice has the huskiness of tears in it, despite her smile.*)

HE (*in a low, vibrating voice, much moved.*)

Glorious young fools! But there was no appeal from the accursed fate

that parted us. How could we fight the great army of common sense arrayed against us? What could I say when your father asked me, with a sneer, how I proposed to keep you? I remember muttering something about my pay, and he coldly inquired whether I found it so much more than I required to keep myself on. What could I do?

SHE

Nothing but what you did. And what could I do when I was told that a long engagement with you would absolutely damn your career by hampering you at the outset?

HE

You were helpless as I in the hands of Destiny, and Destiny cares nothing about broken hearts.

SHE (*derisively*)

So, now all we have to do is to make the best of things and assure ourselves that we are better off as we are. But you'll own I did wait quite a long time. I have only been married three years.

HE

And I only two.

SHE

Yes, but you were abroad and did not come into your money until three years ago. Don't pride yourself on superior constancy, my dear Sholto. How many loves have you had in the meantime?

HE

How many have you?

SHE (*shrugging her shoulders*)

Oh, I have not been totally neglected! I might have married a dozen times.

HE

And why did you at last?

SHE

My dear man—I was nearly forty!

HE

If you had only waited another three years, we might—

SHE (*sharply*)

If you had only written to me, I might!

HE (*penitently conscious of having forgotten her for many years*)

Why didn't I? I wish to God I had!
Rose—Rose—if I had only seen you—
only known—

SHE (*with a sudden change in voice and manner*)

There is my husband—look—over
by the boathouse—and with such a
pretty girl!

HE

Your husband! That boy?

SHE

Didn't I tell you he was younger
than I? And don't you know that the
woman of forty today invariably mar-
ries a boy—when she has the chance,
as she generally has. Young people
don't marry each other nowadays.

HE (*testily*)

There is nothing more idiotic than
for a woman to marry a man young
enough to be her son. By Jove! He's
with my wife!

SHE

Your wife? That child?

HE (*with an affronted air*)

You surely could not imagine that
a man of my age would marry the hack
of half a dozen seasons?

SHE

Oh, no; certainly not. I forgot for
the moment. Elderly men always
want to marry girls just out of the
schoolroom. You must introduce me
to your wife, Major; she looks charm-
ing. Let us go and meet them. My
husband will be delighted to make
your acquaintance.

(*They cross to the good-looking young man who is talking with great animation to a pretty girl on the river bank.*)

SHE

Ah, here you are, Murray! I want
to introduce you to Major St. Quintain,
a very old friend of mine.

HE

Trixie, my dear, this is Mrs. Murray
MacDonald, one of my oldest and best
friends.

MURRAY (*to himself*)

What a shame! A ripping girl like
that to be married to a wornout old
Johnny!

TRIXIE (*to herself*)

Oh, how could he marry such a
passé old thing? She might be his
mother!

BOTH (*aloud, and quite genially*)
So glad to meet you.



CULTIVATE vices when you are young, and when you are old they will
not forsake you.



CONTENTMENT knocks at every man's door, but is usually ordered off the
premises.



BEWARE of the man who would rather soil his conscience with deceit than
his hands with honest toil.

WHEN A MAN'S FIT

By WILLIAM MARCUS MACMAHON

JOHN PRENTISS PALMER, member of the New York Stock Exchange and the half-dozen clubs worth while, stealthily alighted on the off side of the afternoon express from the city, made a careful, wide detour through the Long Branch yards—and thus left his deluded chauffeur waiting in the tourabout six for the next train.

Palmer had no premeditated plan or alibi prepared—the trouble was too new and heavy upon him for that. Pitifully wounded by the confirming of a thing he had scorned to believe, and stung into savagery because others knew, he blindly obeyed the animal impulse to stalk and kill. Aye, that was it, to gain his summer home unseen, preferably by way of the garden walk, while his wife and her alleged cavalier were serenely expecting a far-off, dusty warning down the boulevard.

Once upon a time it might have been credible that a wronged husband was the last to learn of that which concerned him most, but not in this magic day of the anonymous telephone. Just after the market closed, Palmer answered an unidentified ring.

"Go home on foot through the fields this afternoon," said a disguised, feminine voice, "if you wish to catch your wife—and Teddy Lisenard!"

Hiding his shame from office ears, the husband raged at Central in a hoarse whisper, but the best information she could give was that the call came from a downtown pay station near the Cortlandt Ferry. Not even his stenographer saw him take a revolver from the desk—and she was

keeping a particularly close watch over her employer's actions. John Palmer spelled for Miss Kitty Clarke the utter incarnation of masculine enigma—and she had determined to solve the mystery.

That there was a defect in the man's domestic happiness the girl intuitively suspected. And when one is the best-looking shorthand expert in the financial district, with a bushel of bronze tresses and ankles so perfectly turned that strange gentlemen stopped stupidly to stare, it is disconcerting to find the boss absolutely immune.

Spending more hours in his close company than any other man's, she now and then craftily displayed a seductive bit of calf and paraded the marvelous hair, but she could not forget—with an abashed sinking of her huntress's heart—that noon hour when he misinterpreted a brazen hint—and took her to lunch *like a gentleman*.

Shades of Coquetry! As if Kitty did not already know what was on the up-to-date menus at that time of year—hothouse strawberries, artichokes and snails! Why, she had been wined and dined beyond her middle-class opportunities for ten years, could classify champagnes like a head waiter and was quick to discover when a chef of parts deserted one lobster palace for a rival concern. In that educating period, probably a dozen rich men-about-town assiduously pursued this gray-eyed, red-lipped creature, nearly all married, some under assumed names, but every jack of them—an they tell the truth—will say the worst in giving Miss Clarke her proper title of—"good fellow."

Phew-w-w! The embarrassment of that open taxicab that John Palmer provided en route to the most exclusive restaurant on the island of Manhattan! A majority of the women present wore cabbage heads of expensive spring violets at their corsages, and her host was as pointedly deferential as if she were the lady daughter of his dearest friend. After a not too elaborate meal, the employer gallantly handed his stenographer into a conveyance to be taken home alone, and she leaned impulsively from the tonneau to justify herself.

"Mr. Palmer," said Kitty Clarke, too near tears for insincerity, "cross my heart, I'm a decent girl, and—and—"

"And I'm accustomed to that kind of society; Mrs. Palmer is a good woman," gravely observed the man.

"Oh, I see! Then, you won't want me in your office any more?"

"On the contrary, my dear child, I shall increase your salary, so that you can enjoy some of the social diversions that your nature craves. Why—why, I might have had a daughter nearly your age by now! What are you—about twenty-two? . . . Twenty-nine! There, there—don't cry! Have a pleasant homeward ride; looks like a big market for us tomorrow. Good night."

Thereafter, if married he-flirts or self-seeking bachelors sought to force a different kind of attention upon Miss Clarke, she reminded herself that they were not fit to brush John Prentiss Palmer's boots—and repulsed them with added cruelty. She idealized the man for setting her aright, and, being conspicuously feminine from the tips of her willow plumes to the soles of the *suede* No. 2's, only awaited a change in his attitude to idolize him.

Kitty Clarke's sympathy would have been dangerously fired had she known of that secret telephonic warning, but after the initial shock Palmer went through his routine mechanically. He calmly dictated the necessary letters, and at the corner kiosk selected the afternoon papers with discrimination

—one for its literary worth, another for sports and a third because of the excellent cartoons that keep it alive. Indeed, he felt to the full his continual amazement at the Hudson tube, which makes of man a super-mole, and it was not until he boarded the outgoing train at Jersey City that the weight of the weapon in his pocket bespoke a mission.

Who was the Man in the Case? Theodore Lispenard III, son of a respected captain of industry, and grandson of a distinguished soldier. How was he fashioned? A handsome, blue-eyed, yellow-haired, straight-limbed six footer of twenty-five years. What were his titles? Tennis expert, golf crack and tallyho crank. And his station? So rich in inheritance that Stock Exchange possibilities appealed to him no more than the commercial chances of the Fulton fish market.

And the Woman? Beautiful, brunette, petite Mabel Palmer, intelligent, refined, perfectly poised, with a sense of humor delicately masculine; married twenty years and not appearing within ten summers of her thirty-seven.

Ah! theirs had been an adolescent romance—she a lovable lass of seventeen, he a smitten lad of twenty.

When Palmer reached the garage on his place, a stone's throw back of the huge bungalow, the two watch dogs, Cleo, of the buckskin head and white body, and the brindle, Danger, rushed to greet him. They were leashed trolley-wise to overhead wires, and aside from the sudden metallic rattle, these hush-mouthed, pit-bred bull terriers made no noise.

"Down!" said their master gruffly, in no mood for play, and at the unexpected sound a large white, prick-eared dog chained at the garage door set up an aggrieved clamor.

"Good avenin', sorr!" exclaimed the old gardener, emerging from the hothouse. "'Tis Misther Lispenard's proize show tarrier-r, strayed here a-flirtin' wid Clayoo! Oi've tied him awa-a-y from Danger-r'. His masther jist tillyphoned from the Counthry Club thot he won't be here today, at all, at

all, but'll sind a mon for the mutt. Oi understand the gentleman is going abroa-a-d tomorrow for two months, a-thryin' for the international singles, sorr."

John Palmer, dumbly digesting the words, "today," "tomorrow" and "two months," allowed his servant to ramble on.

"Sorr, 'tis a curious thing about the tan-faced la-ady there. Here's the brindle, who has been her consthant companion for foive years—an' thot's a long time in the loife av a dawg. Well, over comes this spindlin' whoite pup wid his binch-show airs, an', mind ye, she's for coquettin' wid him loike a middle-aged maid sarvint an' a young policeman! Shure, 'twould only take our shmall warrior here fifteen minutes to make the Lisperar-rd pet shqueal loike a pig caught undher a gate!"

"And then?" inquired the master idly.

"Oho, sorr, afther thot she'd turn against the cur-r an' his impidence—an' tear him to pieces! 'Tis ahlmost human these thoroughbrids are, sorr!"

John Palmer gazed straight into the eyes of Michael Kenny, this time-tried retainer who had cut the very roses for his master's christening twoscore years gone by. And it was a loyal, understanding look that met the challenge. Silently the rich man held out his hand; the old gardener pressed it without a word and turned to his work.

"Come here, Danger!" said Palmer. He took the thirty-five pounds of pure combativeness by the scruff of the neck, admiring the even teeth and the terribly efficient jaw. Then, after softly stroking the complaisant Cleo, he retraced his steps in time to clamber over an arriving train—and so alighted safely before the unsuspecting mechanician.

Arriving home respectably, via the front of the house, he went directly to his quarters—in that wing most distant from Mrs. Palmer's boudoir. Locking the door, Palmer stripped to the middle and stood before the pier glass.

With brutal frankness, the mirrored

reflection told him that, like an unfought dog or an overfed horse, he had grown unnecessarily thick in the neck and much too gross at the waist line. Alone surviving the attacks of inactivity, the man's bulging biceps bore witness to the muscularity of his youth.

Wherefore, South Brooklyn Con O'Callahan, sparring instructor *emeritus* received a summons to a certain Wall Street address. There a dignified, level-eyed gentleman of middle height and sturdy physique arranged matters in a businesslike manner.

"The walls and floor of a large, private room down the hall," said this intending employer genially, "have been padded so that we can work without injury to ourselves or annoyance to others. It is a gymnasium in miniature—punching bag, rowing machine, wrestling mat, dumb bells, Indian clubs and a shower bath. I will expect you two hours every week day excepting Saturday, when I remain out of town—and I shall need you two months. What are your terms?"

"Five dollars an hour, sir; an' I'll furnish me own gloves an' a wrist machine," promptly replied Cornelius Aloysius the generous. "But what lessons do ye require? I give boxin', fightin' or thug's tricks. Or is it the weight you wish rayduced?"

Now, it is unprofitable for a patient to hide symptoms from his physician. Palmer did not quibble. "In my Freshman days I made halfback on the scrub team that scored *twice* against the 'Varsity, which probably does not mean much to you," said he simply. "I quitted my college career to get married when quite young. And now an overgrown cad is causing lies to be told about my wife. He is a strong man and a clever one, with a very good left."

"By Gawd, sir!" cried O'Callahan warmly, himself a married man. "I'll teach ye the double-handed art of a professional murderer!"

"And will I be fit for a bad quarter-hour by the end of eight weeks?" ventured the man of affairs—to be

properly rebuked by this son of battles.

"Sir, a guy wit' your grievance should be able to go that distance right off the reel! Now, on days you stay away from the city, can ye not do some road work afoot, like a man ought, usin' heart an' lungs an' sweatin' bucketfuls, instead of beatin' it up the pike wit' the breat' of gasoline? Say, I'll stake ye to a fightin' bull pup on a chain, good for a ten-mile drag t'rough the dust, an'—"

"Never mind; I've two grown dogs of the Pilot strain at my country place."

"Take 'em bote!"

Theodore Lispenard returned to the adulation of his Country Club associates on a gymkana day. He had as carriage guests his fiancée, the blonde, anemic Ethel Morton of the asphalt millions, and her chaperon, the dark-eyed, distracting Mrs. John Prentiss Palmer. It would take four long acts of a problem play to show why this trio coalesced with so much friendliness. Briefly, the ladies were often together the better to watch one another; the gentleman imagined he was driving tandem!

The local tennis proved too poor to interest a man who *almost* lifted the British cup; the field events were a feeble imitation of those he had lately witnessed at English tournaments; but when a pair of nine-ounce boxing gloves appeared on the gymnasium floor Lispenard enthusiastically excused himself—and left his ladies to their tea in the gallery. Here was a native sport that outdid the bloodless athletic stunts of any foreign nation on the globe, and he was American enough to rejoice in it.

Sparring was one of the Lispenard conceits, and, in truth, it was diverting to see the tall, broad-shouldered, shirtsleeved amateur cuffing a stodgy fellow clubman, who had a mistaken idea of gameness, about the room. Teddy was polishing off his hapless opponent in a spectacular series of smothering jabs, emulating the traditional cooper hooping a barrel, when

John Palmer appeared in the gallery and quietly took a seat at his wife's side.

The lady did not start, since it is a mark of low origin to show surprise, but she *was* annoyed. "John," she said, viewing him frowningly, "I understood you were leaving today for your Canadian camp!"

"*Tomorrow* I go for *two months*," replied the husband, emphasizing his words for their reminiscent value; "and somehow I thought you might wish to accompany me."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the astounded wife, beginning to fear that her abstemious lord was at last in liquor. "I've made all my summer plans. If you *must* have female company, I give you full permission to take along your—stunning stenographer."

At this critical juncture the triumphant Lispenard, seeking more worlds of muscle to conquer, called out banteringly from the gym floor: "Will any other kind gentleman oblige the professor?"

"I'm your man!" shouted back the unexpected Palmer boyishly.

From the languid, amused manner with which his wife and Miss Morton surveyed him, no one could have guessed how immediately, inwardly tense they were.

"These pillows," declared Lispenard judicially, "make rather poor sport!" A trifle disturbed that his gage had been taken up by this man, of all men, he was minded to bluff him out, instead of going on and being compelled to inflict a humiliating punishment.

"Jist a minute, sorr!" spoke out an old Irishman at the servant's doorway, where he had been tiptoeing in mortal anxiety. "Oi've a pair av two-ouncers in the tourabo-o-ut!"

Then those interested knew that the Palmer-Lispenard affair was to degenerate into vulgar fisticuffs between husband and would-be interloper. "J. P. is drunk!" Mrs. Palmer assured Miss Morton. "I *do* hope Teddy will not hurt him *too* much!" The engaged girl beamed. Even the most artificial and highly eradicated of us will at

times bell to the spectacle of a blood letting combat, especially if our champion be to the fore.

Theodore Lispenard turned white at the Michael Kenny episode, but it was with anger. When someone called "Time!" he rushed, and commenced to cut viciously at his man with the small gloves. Again and again his blows landed, without a return from the besieged broker. It looked like a shamefully one-sided match, there being present no professional to point out that nine times out of ten Palmer's hands or crossed forearms received the brunt of the attack.

Suddenly, with a jolt to the jaw that traveled less than half a foot, and from an awkward angle, Palmer knocked Lispenard down. A smothered shriek resounded from the gallery. It came from the dismayed Morton heiress. Mrs. Palmer leaned forward, wide-eyed, beginning to show the unwelcome symptoms of surprise.

Teddy quickly arose. He saw that not only was there an infuriated husband in front of him but a confoundedly capable one. The plain proposition was to whip or be whipped—and before a very critical audience, to say the least. He determined to oppose speed to strength, and so the renewed contest took on the aspect of greyhound against bulldog.

John Palmer, stoically walking in upon his slashing adversary, could not entirely avoid being marked about the face and head, but occasionally he landed solid body blows that paid well for the crimson investment. Finally, working Lispenard into a corner of the room, he again put him to the floor, this time with a wicked swing to the stomach.

It sickened the tennis expert. When his breath came back, he said conciliatingly: "Whoa, Jack! Blessed if I know why this stunt was forced on me, but I'm not keen for any more of it."

The victor glanced, almost apologetically, to where his wife glowed like a damask rose beside the liliated Ethel. Then he blinked twice to

make certain that his sight was not playing him false. Mrs. Palmer had bared one jeweled hand, and now brazenly showed it over the edge of the railing *with the thumb turned down!*

Dragging Lispenard to his feet, Palmer pronounced sentence: "Guard yourself, you colossal cur! From the pretty part you tried to play, I didn't think you'd quit so soon!" And having his man nicely measured, he sent across the O'Callahan favorite, a terrific overhand smash to the face. Then and there, Theodore Lispenard III had to be turned nose down over two chairs to avoid strangling him in his own blood, the sad feature being that some of his manly beauty fled forever with that badly deflected septum.

"'Twas jist elivin minutes, sorr!" announced old Kenny, the only bucko there methodical enough for statistics; and he mumbled to himself: "Shure, Oi knew the whoite-livered baste wud toorn tail whin the masher tuk ather him!"

Later Miss Ethel Morton said to Palmer in a bitter aside: "Ah, you brute, raw from the cave, I'm sorry I 'phoned you!"

When at last alone with her husband, Mrs. Palmer affected a gaiety she did not exactly feel. "Will Jack the Giant Killer," she inquired, trying to bring her wonderful eyes to bear, "consider the possibility of taking his little wife with him to Canada? She has *never* been a naughty creature, only a tiny bit indiscreet—and that young fool was commencing to be an *awful* bore!"

Palmer recognized abject surrender in the lightly spoken words, and he replied in kind: "Well, providing he does not take the well recommended 'stunning stenographer,' in what capacity would the married lady go—as slave, squaw or sweetheart?"

Still seeking to ensnare his gaze, she rejoined: "The very silly little matron in question is free, white and over twenty-one, but I believe she *can* again enjoy slavery; fortunately, she is without Indian blood, so there would be no false giving or backbiting,

and—and *perhaps* her possessor will not be disappointed in—in the—the love making if *she* is his choice!"

Here the husband risked a daring glance at his clever wife, swiftly came closer and tested the sincere depths of her melting brown orbs.

"May I go with you, Jack? Ah, you darling! Hold me tightly in your strong arms as a protection forever and ever and ever—against any more misunderstandings."

And John Prentiss Palmer, newly reappointed to an ambassadorship at the court of—

Howbeit, the confidences of a married couple are sacred. Incidentally, Cornelius Aloysius is sporting a diamond the size of a soup plate, a gift from so mysterious a source that Mrs. O'Callahan begins to fear he stole it. And Miss Clarke, with a raise of five hundred dollars per annum, is seriously considering the advisability of supporting more than her share of a family establishment.

Goodness gracious, what is a girl to do, going on thirty, with all her good looks, when every prosperous fellow

she fancies promptly makes other proposals than the delectable matrimonial one? It would seem wiser to accomplish the kidnapping of Palmer & Co.'s new assistant bookkeeper, a wageworker like herself and a well spoken, affectionate youth, who firmly believes that he is the very first to see in Kitty the combined attributes of Cleopatra, Joan of Arc and Irene Franklin. She has been with him to dine at Dennett's and Childs's—and never a word escaped the diplomatic, gray-eyed, red-lipped darling anent wine list, *demi-tasse* or finger bowl! There only remains the buffet lunch to complete her subjection.

However, the actual venture into that much-extolled and widely advertised bourne of wedded bliss can wait until the boss returns from his vacation. Then, if by hook or crook he can be inveigled to the ceremony, surely Mr. Palmer will not refuse a bride-taking into account her long employment with the firm—the customary caress.

Suffering Cupid! What a consuming lust there is in the unknissed kiss!



SONG OF THE MOONS

By JEANNETTE I. HELM

OH, the new moon is the heart of a maid,
That glows with a frozen fire,
Eager to love, yet half afraid
Of the strength of her own desire.

And the full, round moon is a wanton bold,
That knows each trick and wile,
And scatters on worshipers untold
The largesse of her smile.

But the waning moon is a vestal pale,
Who with prayer is wan and worn,
And creeps behind some dark cloud's veil,
To weep her love forsworn.

KEATING'S REVENGE

By L. H. DAZEY

KEATING, captain of marines, sang out of the fullness of his heart as he rode into Manila from the Melite Barracks. It was the refrain of a song he and Katherine had heard at a London music hall during their brief honeymoon the summer before:

"For she's my lassie, my bonnie lassie;
She's as fair as the heather in the dell."

His voice, keeping time to the steady beat of his horse's hoofs, rang out clear and strong in the still tropical night.

Life seemed good to Keating. He was at peace with all the world. Only a few years before the dull monotony of his existence had borne down upon him like a leaden weight. A clerk in the leading hardware store of a small town in the Middle West, he had dragged himself to his daily work in weariness of spirit.

For Keating had been born a soldier. Stirring within him was the blood of heroes. In his inmost soul he felt himself capable of mighty deeds such as had echoed down the ages with the names of those idols of his—conquerors like Cæsar and Napoleon, generals like Sherman and Grant.

He knew them all. Had he not pored over pages of history and devoured volumes of biography and memoirs until the great ones grew to seem of a common brotherhood with himself, members of that shining company which he, too, would have glorified had not fate stripped him bare of opportunity and nailed him to a cross of uninspiring toil.

In his childhood West Point and Annapolis had been names to conjure with, but the death of his father, which

made him a wage earner at fourteen, put an end to his boyhood dreams. The future stretched before him a dreary waste. His one solace during all those barren years had been his connection with the local militia company. Into its affairs he had thrown himself with all the zeal of an ardent and enthusiastic nature.

With his election as captain he tasted for the first time the joy of leadership and found it sweet. When, soon after, he received notice from his employers that he must sever his relations with the militia and devote some of the energy he had displayed in that direction to the affairs of the firm, Keating felt himself the sport of fate, and hope died within him. As long as there were a dependent mother and sisters at home, he dared not hesitate.

It was the day on which he was to tender his resignation that the blowing up of the *Maine* startled the world and made war with Spain a certainty.

Whatever opinions there might be in diplomatic circles as to the justice of that war, Keating always regarded it as a direct dispensation of Providence. At last he had come into his own.

His company was mustered in with Keating in command. His regiment was among the first to be ordered to the front. He received his baptism of fire at El Caney. He was with Roosevelt at San Juan. His record there opened the way to his commission in the Marine Corps. His duty in the Philippines had brought him more than one medal for gallantry in action—and there was his brevet as major!

Keating had made good. He said it over to himself with a little thrill of exultation. He had made good!

Let others scoff at the service if they liked. It had been a matter of intense surprise to find that many of his fellow officers looked upon the profession which had been the goal of his heart's desire merely as a means of livelihood. The inadequacy of their pay formed a source of never failing conversation, a continual grievance; but Keating refused to be disillusioned.

What other career could send the blood galloping through one's veins as his had done when the news reached him a few hours before that his company was ordered to China to the relief of the besieged legations? He was to have another crowded hour of glorious life!

And yet tonight there was mingled with his excitement, with the scent of the battle from afar, a tender and sobering thought. It was his first call to active duty since his marriage. His colonel, with an understanding for which Keating blessed him from the depths of his soul, had given him permission to ride into the city for this last night with Katherine.

What should he say—how break the news to her? She was a soldier's daughter, born and reared amid the din of battle, for her father, the fine old General, had been a famous Indian fighter in the '70's. Often in the early days of their acquaintance Keating had listened to her, as she recounted some exploit of her father's youth, and watching her as she glowed with pride and admiration, seeming to catch the very spirit of the deed, he had thought her the incarnation of womanly courage.

He remembered that it was she who had offered to meet poor Wallace's wife, she who had led her to the ghastly, twisted thing which was all that the Moros had left of the man whose nickname of the "Apollo of the Army" had been so well bestowed. Keating had heard her noble words of courage and consolation to the stricken girl, and had said to himself that

Katherine Deering was cast in a heroic mold.

And now at the mere thought of danger to Keating she became a trembling flower, a timid, shrinking creature, all doubts and fears.

He had an uneasy feeling that he might have headed the expedition that had been sent to Samar a month or so before, had it not been for lack of initiative on his part. Katherine had scented danger, and half jokingly, half in earnest, had demanded as her right, the right of the newly wed, that at least he would not bestir himself unduly.

So certain had he been of the appointment that he had given his promise. When, to his intense disgust, the troops marched away without him, Keating found it hard to analyze his feelings. Certainly, if there was anger, it could not be directed toward his wife, his bonnie, bonnie lassie. Pride there certainly was, pride that love for him should prompt her fears.

How blessed among men she had made him! He recalled the first time he had seen her, a laughing blue-eyed girl coming down the gangplank with her father, who had been sent out from Washington to report on conditions in the islands. Up to that time, women, except in the guise of the still dependent mother and sisters at home, had not entered into Keating's scheme of things, but often after Katherine's arrival he would lie awake for half the night, until, staring out into the darkness, he would fancy he could see her face smiling at him as she had smiled that day at the steamer.

For, after all, Keating was young, and the birds still sang in his heart, and those laughing blue eyes were calculated to make a man forget even such impassable barriers as great wealth and position could raise.

Manila in those days, as far as the English speaking population was concerned, was a very small place, and their meeting was inevitable. There followed a month of delicious torture for Keating—days of alternate bliss and despair, nights when the battles

he fought with himself put to shame his encounters on the field. It was the kind old General who, discovering the secret he had thought so well concealed, had at last put an end to his misery. As long as Keating lived he would remember their talk that night under the oleanders. In some wonderful way he had been made to feel that he might dare accept all—more, that in doing so, he, too, would be the giver.

His marriage, his six months' leave, the hurried trip abroad and return to the Philippines—there were times when it all seemed like a dream.

The streets were quiet and deserted as he rode into the city. He dismounted when he came near the house. Katherine, he knew, would be alone, for the General had started a few days before on an official tour of the islands. He did not wish to alarm her. He would try to arouse one of the servants.

As he advanced quietly he was surprised to hear the sound of stealthy footsteps on the veranda. It might mean mischief; the natives were not to be trusted.

He stopped a moment. The night was almost as bright as day. He saw plainly the figure of a man skulking toward the doorway. He heard a low knock; the door opened softly; the man was speaking to someone within. His voice seemed strangely familiar; it couldn't be— It was Burdett, his own first lieutenant, who was to report for duty tomorrow after a month's sick leave. What was he doing there at that time of night?

Keating moved a step nearer; the voice went on:

"I got your letter, sweetheart, and I came as soon as I could. I never dreamed of such luck—"

The door opened wide. The moon shone full on the face of Burdett and on that of Katherine, as with the smile Keating knew so well she held out her hand in welcome. The door closed upon them both.

For a moment Keating stood as one who had received a mortal blow, the force of which had not at once reached the vital spot. Then with a bound he

leaped up the steps of the veranda and would have hurled himself against the door.

Some impulse stopped him. It was the instinct of protection toward the woman he had worshiped asserting itself even then. He must keep quiet, or there would be a crowd of gaping, open-eyed servants. Not that way. He could not. His girl, his proud, high-spirited girl!

The confusion of his thoughts blinded him, but he managed to stumble back to his horse. He rode until he had left the city far behind. Then, turning his horse loose, he threw himself face down upon the ground and cursed the God who made him. One horrible oath after the other poured from his lips; to him the universe was damned. Hell itself had unclosed for him all her mysteries.

Toward morning he grew calmer, and sitting up, his head buried in his hands, he tried to think. What did it all mean? What was left to him? Life, still, for he could feel the throbbing of his bursting brain under his palms. The service, which he had so passionately loved! There was no responsive echo in his heart.

His love for Katherine! To Keating's surprise, that was not gone. It was there in its old place, no longer joyous and exulting, but a dumb, hurt, aching thing. She had crowned his life. Ungrudgingly, royally, she had given herself to him. He was still her debtor, hers to serve if need be. How could he best serve her? He must go out of her life—that much was certain.

If it had been anyone but Burdett—Burdett, with whom no woman's name was safe, the reckless, daredevil son of a family notorious for its ill gotten wealth and power no less than for its private scandals! Keating sickened as he thought of the Filipino planter who had come to the barracks, seeking vengeance for a deadly wrong done his daughter.

The influence of Burdett's family, his kinship with the Colonel, the honored chief of the corps, had saved him from court-martial more than once;

this time he would hardly go free. And that was how long ago? Only a few days—at the very time Burdett was winning Katherine from him—he had been laying his snares for the poor girl whose story had filled Keating with shame and disgust!

The man was tainted through and through—unclean, unfit to live. That was it—unfit to live!

The tumult in Keating's brain had ceased. He was thinking clearly and logically now. Burdett must die! He should spoil no other woman's life.

Until dawn Keating sat there. When he arose his purpose was formed. Burdett must die, and Keating was the instrument that Providence had chosen for the task. How or where it was to be accomplished he did not know; the way would be shown to him.

His horse was standing quietly a few yards away. He mounted and rode in the direction of the barracks.

The day that followed was one of the most strenuous toil—the march to the city, the hurried farewells, the embarkment of the troops. Keating went through it all with no outward sign. During the few moments he had alone with Katherine he had spoken little, and she herself was strangely silent. If, as he held her to him for the last time, his eyes had failed to meet hers, she had not seemed to notice.

Aboard the transport Keating came face to face with Burdett, but still he gave no sign; the time had not yet come. He must wait until this Chinese business was finished. There were few enough officers as it was, and, Keating admitted to himself dispassionately, Burdett could be depended on when there was work to be done.

The days dragged on. Outwardly Keating's life moved in untroubled calm. His men still gave him the unquestioned loyalty, the doglike devotion that enlisted men give only to those whom nature has made leaders. The younger officers looked up to him with half-unwilling respect; the older ones sought his company, for he still recalled to them the ideals of their youth.

But in Keating's heart there was a festering sore. Day by day it grew and fed on his hatred of Burdett. It would never stop growing until he had felt his hands around Burdett's throat, until he had seen the wicked face distorted with pain, the lying eyes growing dim in death. Only then could he satisfy this gnawing thing in his breast.

But it must be done quietly; no hint of the truth must creep out, no breath of scandal scorch Katherine. The way would be shown him. He could wait.

At the storming of the Chinese forts of Taku, Keating and Burdett fought side by side. And so again at the first day's battle of Tientsin. There a small force of Russians and Americans had been sent to the relief of the foreign settlements which were surrounded and besieged by the Boxers. The small body of Europeans, less than six hundred in all, were met by an overwhelming force of Chinese, and for the first time Keating knew the bitterness of defeat in battle. Retreat was the only thing possible. The Americans had the rear guard, the position most difficult and exposed to danger.

Keating, rallying his men as best he could, was conscious of the lurching of a body against him. Looking down, he saw that it was Burdett.

God! Was he to be cheated of his revenge like that? This man, this seducer of women, to die the death of a hero!

He pulled the wounded man to his feet. There was still life in him, the life that was his and his alone to take in his own good time, in his own way!

Keating dragged the body on a few rods and then put it down while he tried to stand off the swarm of Boxers that were pursuing. Armstrong, his orderly, was at his elbow shouting to him to save himself. Burdett had recovered consciousness.

"For God's sake, Keating," he groaned, "get out of this! I'm done for, anyway. Get out while there's time! It's no use, I tell you—"

Keating picked him up and struggled on. Armstrong still remained, but the retreating line of the troops had got well ahead. The day was blistering hot. There was no water; they had marched a long distance and had been fighting since morning, but Keating never for a moment faltered.

When the bullets grew too thick he would put his burden down and take up his rifle, and with every shot he dropped his man. Armstrong himself seldom missed.

A score of Chinese with their antiquated weapons and bad marksmanship would have had no chance. But the odds were so great, perhaps a hundred to one. If only they could find cover! The country was as level as a floor and perfectly open, but Keating had noticed on the line of march that morning the ruins of a Chinese hut. That would afford shelter for a time. It could not be far away. He remembered distinctly the lay of the land.

The two men struggled on. Burdett had again lost consciousness. Armstrong, protesting with every breath, was nevertheless helping to carry him. The bullets were growing thicker, but the hut was in reach at last.

Taking their stand behind the ruined wall, Keating and Armstrong began dropping the advancing Chinamen. So deadly was their aim that for a moment the onrush of the enemy was checked. But their ammunition was almost gone. In the distance Keating had seen the dust that marked the line of the retreating column. A scant half-mile ahead lay safety. It was their only chance. Throwing away their weapons and taking up their burden, the two men began the dash for life. What might have been the end, but for a half-dozen Cossacks, the white-coated hussars of the Czar, who, attracted by the sound of firing, had fallen behind their companions, no one may know. Suddenly coming in sight of the little group and realizing their plight, the Russians advanced and covered the three Americans with their fire. The Chinese halted, and,

becoming aware of the nearness of the European lines, gave up the pursuit.

When at length Keating and Armstrong sank to the ground in utter exhaustion, the shouts of their own men were ringing in their ears; for hours they knew no more.

There was another battle at Tientsin a day or so later, and that was a different story. Keating won his share of glory in that engagement, but it was as Dead Sea fruit that turned to ashes in his hand. The lust of battle had gone from him. Always in his mind was the image of Burdett lying between life and death in the improvised hospital on the transport.

The day the troops began their march to Peking Keating sat by his bedside. Burdett was raving with fever, and Keating listened in a panic of terror for the name of Katherine; but only the grinning yellow devils whose bullets had so nearly been the end of him seemed to haunt Burdett. Blood poisoning had begun, and there was talk of amputation. Quietly and convincingly Keating argued the matter with the surgeon, and when he left he had the promise that the leg should be spared. He meant to have his revenge, not on some maimed and crippled creature, but on a man in the full flush of youth and strength.

The march to Peking, the relief of the legations, the occupation of the Forbidden City, all this was a matter of months.

It was September when Keating saw Burdett again. He was sitting up, looking pale and thin but whole. A few weeks and he would be more than Keating's match physically, as he had been before. That was as Keating wished. He needed no advantage; the justness of his cause was enough.

As he sat watching Burdett, his hand closed on a package of unopened letters in his pocket. He wondered if Burdett was treasuring letters from Katherine. He would look into that. There must be no written word of hers to crop up among Burdett's things afterward. Ah, well, it would all be

over soon—before the next transport sailed.

Burdett was speaking and Keating forced himself to listen.

"I didn't send for you, Keating, to gush over you for saving my life. We never seemed to hit it off any too well, and I guess I'm about the last one you'd have picked out to do a rescue act like that for. There's something else."

Burdett's words came slowly, almost painfully.

"You see, it sort of gives a fellow a new line on things lying here all these months with nothing to do but look up at the ceiling. You can't think of what's ahead of you—it makes your brain whirl. So you've just got to go over and over again what's past; it keeps crowding on you; you can't push it away, though, God knows, there's some of it you'd like to well enough!"

Keating gripped the arms of his chair. Sitting there, listening quietly to the slow speech of the man he hated, was taxing his endurance to the limit. Patience! Patience! He had waited so long. He could wait a little longer.

Burdett continued slowly:

"I'm not trying to whitewash myself, Keating. Maybe, after all, it's only a case of, 'when the devil was sick,' but there's one thing I want to get off my mind. It's about Katherine—your wife—"

Keating's brain was on fire. If the man kept on he must kill him where he sat. Everything, the room, the figure of Burdett, the atmosphere that surrounded them both, was turning a vivid, glowing red.

Burdett went on:

"I'd seen a good deal of her during my leave, and I—you see, women have always looked just about alike to me. The night before we left Manila she sent for me. I was fool enough to think—well, I was a conceited fool, that's all. She'd just heard we were going to China, and was scared to death—thought maybe I'd have enough influence with the Chief to get you off—said you weren't physically fit. You're a lucky devil, Keating, and I learned a lesson that night I'll try not to forget."

He had risen weakly to his feet and was holding out his hand.

"Will you take it, Keating?" he said. Keating rose, too. For an instant his eyes met Burdett's. Straight through the red light down into his stricken soul there flashed a message of truth and sincerity. Then he felt the snapping of an iron band around his head; about his heart a flood of healing waters surged.

Dropping into a chair, he buried his head in his arms and wept like a child, while Burdett, swearing softly under his breath, looked on in wonder and dismay.



"YOUNG man," said the Pompous Old Codger, "if you would be successful in this world, begin at the bottom and work up." And the well digger walked sadly away, scratching his head and wondering how that could be.



"THE wicked shall stand in slippery places"—which suggests that it is not well to be too pious in a sleet storm.

HILDETUA*

By GEORGE B. SEITZ

CHARACTERS

HILDETUA (*daughter of Thorgane*)

HOGWER (*her brother*)

LEUDIGAR (*a chieftain of the Bashan Wood*)

HREIDMAR (*Prince of Burgundy*)

TIME: *Middle of the Eighth Century.*

PLACE: *Scandinavia*

NOTE:—Throughout the play the word "Hell" is used instead of the perhaps more correct word, "Nastrond." But the former word is more expressive to a modern reader.

SCENE—*Interior of the home of Thorgane, a rude viking's hut close to the edge of the Bashan Wood.*

It is made of heavy beams, worn and smoke-stained, and everything about it is primitive and crude. At the left side of the back wall is a door and at the right side an open window. Down at the right is a huge fireplace constructed of great rocks, in which is a heavy iron crane holding a boiling pot. Before this is a great wooden bench, and opposite, at the left, is another. In the center of the room stands a rough square table, and several primitive stools are scattered about. On the wall, between the window and the door, a great shield and two mammoth spears are hung. The setting sun, shining through the window, fills the room with long shadows and lights up the form of HILDETUA, who stands, her chin resting on her hand, gazing at the hills.

Enter HOGWER, slouchingly. He is thin and lantern-jawed, and has the shifty eyes of one not to be trusted. He slings a brace of rabbits into a corner of the room, and, spying HILDETUA, turns upon her angrily.

HOGWER

Ugh! Why art thou idling there? Must I stand here, empty-bellied, till all thy dreams are dreamed? Where is the meal? Bestir thy bones for once, and cease thy dawdling.

HILDETUA (*turning*)

Nay, brother, the pot boils. Chide me not, but come thou here to me.

See how, o'er yonder crag, the waning sun smiles sadly on the world! He bids farewell, for now must he travel to his death beyond the sea. And now will all the flowers and the birds, the nodding daisy and the shutting marguerite, take them off to sleep, till Balder, in the morning, bids them rise. And see how all the water of the creek is turned to molten gold—to

* Copyright, 1909, by George B. Seitz.

HILDETUA

orange gold that rolls and surges in its bed! Ah, brother mine, 'tis now the world is glorious!

HOGWER

Bah! Thou art a fool. Thou art always dreaming. Wilt thou never wake? Come, bestir thyself. I would eat, and there is blood here on my arm that must be cleaned. It smarts like the cold of Hell!

HILDETUA (*coming down, concerned*)

Oh! Blood! How came thee by it? Art injured badly? Ah!

HOGWER (*holding out his bloody arm*)

Well, do not cringe so, silly. Thou art a poor daughter of Thorgane. Thou art the worst coward that dwells in the Bashan Wood.

HILDETUA

Oh—how didst thou do it? Here, let me wash it. Here is water.

HOGWER

Oh! Be careful—I did crush it 'neath the hoof of Leudigar's steed. The shoe did come unfastened and I did fix it. (*Proudly.*) I have been with him all day long. He has shown me great favor of late, since he deigned to smile on thee. Thou art greatly honored. It is no little thing for the daughter of Thorgane to be loved by him. Great things may come of it.

HILDETUA (*uninterested*)

Yea, 'tis a great honor.

HOGWER

Yet thou dost not seem to appreciate it. Thou must play thy game carefully, girl. He will come here again soon, and thou must play carefully. There is gold in it for me.

HILDETUA

There—thy arm is washed. (*Rising.*) Hogwer, we may as well have an end to this. I do not like Leudigar, and I do not care when he comes, save that it is when I am away. I do not like him, and I would never be his bride.

HOGWER

Bride? Who said aught of bride? By Odin, thou didst not hope to be

his bride? Oh! Ha, ha! Nay, thou little fool, Leudigar does not take simple daughters of Thorgane to wed. But, if thou dost play thy game well, there are riches in it.

HILDETUA

Hogwer, what dost thou mean?

HOGWER

Bah! Thou dost know very well what I mean. If thou art not a fool, thou wilt—wilt smile on Leudigar. He is rich and a powerful chieftain. There is much in it for us.

HILDETUA (*slowly*)

Thou art my brother, Hogwer, but I can ne'er see how the same father sired us. For, Hogwer, thou art an arrant coward.

HOGWER (*starting angrily*)

Eh? What sayest thou?

HILDETUA

Thou art a coward, an arrant coward. Thou canst not get gold for thyself, for thou art too careful of thy pate to go a-viking with the others, so thou must buy it with thy sister. Oh, would that my father, Thorgane, were here! He would teach thee—

HOGWER

Well, he is not, and, while he is not, I am master. (*Sneeringly.*) Thou art a great monument of virtue. One would think thou didst ne'er have a lover. Who is he that has been here thrice? Thou dost shower thy favors on him, and he is one that will not e'en tell his name. Who is he?

HILDETUA

He is an honest man. He—he bade me not to tell his name.

HOGWER

Aye, I know who he is. He is an outlaw—that is who he is—and on his head there is a price. Aye, I know—

HILDETUA (*laughing merrily*)

Ha, ha, ha!

HOGWER

Aye, thou mayst laugh, but I know. He is an outlaw, and if he comes again he had best beware.

HILDETUA

Ha, ha, ha! Oh, Hogwer, *thou wilt not take him?* Oh, Hogwer! Ha! ha!

HOGWER

Well, I—I may not take him, but, by the hammer o' Thor, he *shall* be taken! I will fetch those who will take him, and—

HILDETUA (*her face changing*)

Oh, Hogwer, thou wouldst not do that! Thou wouldst not betray a guest!

HOGWER

Ah, would not I, though? He is an outlaw, and so hospitality does not hold. And, by Valhalla, there may be something in it, too!

HILDETUA

Don't—don't, Hogwer. Don't make me believe thou art—what thou dost seem. Hast thou not, somewhere in thy soul, a spark of manhood? Are thy fingers always twisted in the gold clutch?

HOGWER

Bah! Thou art a sniveling fool. An he comes again, I will—

HREIDMAR (*singing outside*)

Hildetua! Hildetua! Hildetua!

HILDETUA

Oh, 'tis he—'tis he, Hogwer, now! Oh, dear, I do look unsightly! Hogwer, where is thy shield?

(*She runs to the shield and uses one of its shining plates for a mirror.*)

HREIDMAR

Hildetua! (*He enters and stands in the doorway.*) Ah, there thou art, sweet Hildetua! I did sadly fear thou might be away. (*Noticing HOGWER and laying his hand on his sword.*) Who is this?

HILDETUA

Oh, this is my brother! This is Hogwer. Hogwer, this is—this is— (*She stops.*)

HREIDMAR

A friend—merely a friend. Brave Hogwer, I do give thee good day, though, by Valhalla, 'tis nearer even-tide. (*Coming down.*) And to thee,

sweet Hildetua, good day. (*He takes both of HILDETUA's outstretched hands. HOGWER rises and moves toward the door.*) What, good Hogwer, not leaving?

HOGWER (*mumbling*)

Yea, I—I must go. I have much to attend to. I must leave; I— (*He shuffles out.*)

HILDETUA (*running after him*)

Hogwer—Hogwer, wait! Hogwer, where art thou going? . . . Alas, he will not turn!

HREIDMAR

In truth, it is no matter where he goes. Thou hast not greeted me yet, Hildetua.

HILDETUA (*coming back*)

Oh, I do wonder where he goes? I—I do fear—

HREIDMAR

Well, I do not. I do not fear nor care. I do care for naught when thou art here. Sweet Hildetua—(*He takes her in his arms.*)

HILDETUA

Hreidmar—my prince!

(*He kisses her. However, she draws away from him, and her worried expression returns. Again she goes to the door.*)

Oh—I do fear Hogwer. I—I— Hreidmar, I fear that my brother is not as true as he should be. He loves gold. I fear— Oh, Hreidmar, thou must go— thou must not stay here this evening—

HREIDMAR (*laughing*)

Ah, Hildetua, thou art as timid as thou art beautiful! There is no danger. Who would trouble to come here to thy little house for a poor stranger, when the only reward would be a sword bite? (*He takes off his sword and leans it in the corner.*) Nay, fear thee not. But, sweet lady, there is one great danger that hangs o'er my head, and that I do fear most mightily.

HILDETUA (*wide-eyed*)

Oh—what is that?

HREIDMAR

Starvation—*starvation* sweet maid. By Odin, I have had naught to eat since morning dawned. I have traveled far, and thy rocky crags do greatly spur one's appetite. Canst aid me, sweet lady?

HILDETUA

Oh, thou poor youth! Sit thee down and I will prepare the meal. See, the pot boils now. I was about to prepare it for Hogwer when he left. Oh, I wonder where he did go? (*Shaking off her fears.*) Ah! but never mind; perchance all will be well. (*Bringing out a pot of mead.*) 'Twill be sweet, indeed, to have thee here to sup, though I fear thou wilt find it poor fare.

HREIDMAR

Nay, Hildetua; when thou art here, 'tis more princely than my father's hall.

HILDETUA

Tell me, Hreidmar, why dost thou keep thy visits secret? Art ashamed of Thorgane's daughter?

HREIDMAR

Ashamed! Dear heart, thou knowest I am not.

HILDETUA

Then, why art thou so secret?

HREIDMAR

I will tell thee, Hildetua. My father's house is hated by thy chieftain of the Bashan Wood, and he has sworn 'gainst my father's house a blood feud. But he is not brave, and has kept secret his oath, lest he be forced to mount and ride against us. He is not brave, but he is bad. Some day will we ride 'gainst him, and then will his little kingdom vanish. But now 'twould not be well if I were found here—alone. But there—we will not speak of Leudigar; he is not pleasant. Come, let us eat; and then must thou dance for me.

HILDETUA

Leudigar, indeed, is not pleasant. He is a beast. Yea, we will eat and then will I dance for thee. Dost know, they call me Hildetua of the

dance! I can dance the wildest of any in the Bashan Wood. (*Gazing ruefully at the water pail.*) Oh, dear, the pail is empty; I must go to the spring. Wait thou here, and I will be quick. (*She picks up the pail and goes toward the door.*)

HREIDMAR (*stopping her*)

Thou wilt go to the spring? Thou wilt do nothing of the sort. I will go to the spring—I did see it as I passed. Thou must wait here and I will go—

HILDETUA (*in mock sadness*)

Alas, thou art a hard master! Well, here; I suppose I must obey. (*She surrenders the pail, and as he takes it he steals a kiss.*) Oh, thief—thief!

(*She runs after him, laughing, but he escapes safely through the door. For a second she watches him, then, humming, returns to her task of preparing the meal. The sun is now quite low, and the room is dark; so, lighting a pine torch dipped in tallow, she sticks it in the wall and the room brightens. Suddenly quick steps are heard outside; the door is flung open and LEUDIGAR and HOGWER enter.*)

LEUDIGAR

Where? Where is he? Where? (*He gazes about, his drawn sword in his hand.*)

HILDETUA (*in consternation*)

Leudigar—oh—

LEUDIGAR (*to HOGWER*)

Where is he? He is not here—I see no one. An thou hast befooled me, 'twill go hard with thee.

(*LEUDIGAR is a big man with a red face, a red mustache, and little lustful pig eyes.*)

HOGWER

I—why, he was here. I did but just leave him. Hildetua, where has he gone?

HILDETUA

He? Who?

HOGWER

Do not evade. Thou dost know whom I do mean. He who was here with thee—where is he?

HILDETUA

I do not understand. I—

LEUDIGAR

Come, child, do not play with us. Where is the stranger who was here with thee? Who was he, and where is he? Was he an outlaw?

HOGWER (*hunting around*)

Perchance he has hidden.

LEUDIGAR (*to HILDETUA*)

Is he hidden?

HOGWER

Or perchance he saw us and fled.

HILDETUA (*quickly*)

Aye, aye—that is it. He has fled. He did see thee coming and did flee. He is a coward, a base coward; he did see thee coming and did flee to the west. He did go the opposite direction from the spring. He is an outlaw, but no warrior. He is a burner of charcoal and an arrant coward. If thou dost hurry, Leudigar, thou canst o'ertake him and have him for thy thrall. He did flee to the west, away from the spring—hurry!

LEUDIGAR (*suspiciously*)

Thou art infernally anxious for us to take him.

HILDETUA

Aye, that is true, for he has shown me that he is base—he did flee. He did flee to the west, to the woods. If thou dost hurry thou canst o'ertake him.

HOGWER

Aye, come, noble Leudigar; perchance we can.

LEUDIGAR

It seems to me that the maid is o'er anxious. 'Tis strange she should wish to betray her lover.

HILDETUA

Lover! Bah! He was no lover of mine. He desired to be one, but by his flight he has shown that he is base. I would have him taken and punished. Go—go quickly—take him—

LEUDIGAR

Nay. Do thou, Hogwer, go. I will wait here.

HILDETUA

No—no. Send not Hogwer alone. Though he is a cowardly knave, he might wait in hiding and slay Hogwer with treachery. Nay—both of you must go together. He did flee to the west, away from the spring.

LEUDIGAR

Aye, but I think it best that I stay here. Hogwer, art a-feared to go alone?

HOGWER (*squirming*)

Well—er—of course, I am not a-feared, but Hildetua did say he might wait in hiding and with treachery slay me. I—I think it best we both go.

LEUDIGAR

Bah! Thou art a-feared. However, what is a cowardly burner of charcoal? Do thou venture thyself to the high rocks. From there thou canst see if he has fled to the west. The moon is up and thou canst see him clearly 'gainst the meadow land. I will wait here with sweet Hildetua, and then thou canst come back and tell me what thou didst see. Make haste to the rock, but (*nudging him and eying HILDETUA*) make no haste returning.

HOGWER (*knowingly*)

Aye, most noble Leudigar. (*He goes out.*)

HILDETUA

Ah, but Leudigar, thou wilt waste time an thou dost wait till Hogwer returns. The burner of charcoal will escape easily.

LEUDIGAR (*laughing*)

By Odin, I care not! I did but make a fuss because Hogwer did desire it. Nay, sweet maiden, I came to seek no burner of charcoal.

HILDETUA

Thou didst not? Why, I thought—

LEUDIGAR

I did but come to seek a burner of hearts. (*Leering at her.*) I did come to seek thee, sweet Hildetua. Thou dost trouble my heart most monstrously.

HILDETUA (*glancing nervously toward the door*)

I—I am sorry to trouble thee—

HILDETUA

LEUDIGAR

Nay, pretty one, 'tis a sweet troublement, for I do love thee.

HILDETUA

Leudigar, I care for thee not. Wilt thou not go?

LEUDIGAR

Ho, thou art modest! Thou wilt not appear too willing. Come, I would give half of Bashan Wood for a kiss from thy sweet lips, and to feel thy soft arms about me. Hildetua, I do love thee most madly. Wilt thou not smile on me? I am rich, and I will make it worth thy while. *(She does not answer but stands watching him with aversion.)* I do love thy ways—thy ways of the woodland, thy song and thy dance. Thou art called Hildetua of the dance. I do love thy pretty ways and thy locks of gold. Hildetua, I can make thee rich. Wilt thou not—dance for me?

HILDETUA *(gazing about nervously)*

What—what wouldst thou have me dance?

LEUDIGAR

I would have thee dance—the passion dance—Hildetua. *(He comes close to her and tries to clasp her in his arms.)*

HILDETUA *(backing away)*

Nay—get thee gone—away from me!

LEUDIGAR *(holding her)*

Ah, Hildetua, dance for me—the passion dance! Sweet Hildetua, a kiss—

HILDETUA

No, no—get thee gone—no, no!

LEUDIGAR *(his eyes burning)*

Come, one kiss! Come, sweet one, pretty one—

HILDETUA *(fighting him)*

No—no! Oh, Odin, Father Odin, help me! *(Screaming.)* Hreidmar! Hreidmar! Hreidmar! *(She bites his arm.)*

LEUDIGAR *(leaping back angrily)*

Oh—thy hellish teeth! Little witch, thou shalt pay for that.

(The door opens and HREIDMAR stands there, the pail of water in his hand.)

HILDETUA

Hreidmar!

(The two men gaze at each other for a second; then HREIDMAR quietly sets down the water pail, strides to the corner, and, picking up his great sword, draws it.)

LEUDIGAR

Ha! So this is he, is it? So this is thy lover! So! Thy burner of charcoal was Hreidmar, Prince of Burgundy, eh?

HREIDMAR

Aye, Leudigar, her lover is Hreidmar, Prince of Burgundy.

LEUDIGAR *(gleefully)*

By Valhalla, this is good! Dost know, O Prince, what I have sworn 'gainst thy house?

HREIDMAR

I do know what thou hast sworn.

LEUDIGAR

So, thou dost defy me?

HREIDMAR

Aye, Leudigar, I do defy thee.

LEUDIGAR

Then, may thy bones rot in Hell!

(They come together, slashing at each other with mighty blows. Around the room they fight, knocking over the rude table and the stools. HILDETUA, in the corner by the window, breathlessly watches them. HREIDMAR is the better swordsman and slowly drives LEUDIGAR before him. By a skillful wrench he disarms him and his weapon flies to a corner. LEUDIGAR leaps back, breathing heavily, and his eyes flit hither and thither for means of escape. However, instead of dispatching him, HREIDMAR lowers the point of his weapon to the floor and motions LEUDIGAR to pick up the fallen sword. LEUDIGAR does so and they reëngage. At this point HOGWER, who has returned to spy upon LEUDIGAR and his sister, gazes in at the window. Although LEUDIGAR is larger and stouter than HREIDMAR, he is not nearly so agile. Again HREIDMAR

drives him before him, and he is nearly spent; his breath comes with a gasp. He realizes that he is nearly done for and makes a last desperate rally. Summoning all his waning strength, he forces the conflict, and for an instant HREIDMAR is driven back toward the door. As he is there fighting, HOGWER enters, and with a great club strikes him; and HREIDMAR falls.)

HILDETUA

Oh!

LEUDIGAR (*gasping*)

Well struck—well struck, Hogwer! Now he is done for.

HOGWER

Aye, Leudigar, I was here on time.

LEUDIGAR (*sinking on the bench and rubbing his arm*)

Thou wert, indeed, on time. The spawn of Bevis is a tricky swordster. I was hard pressed. My sword arm does ache as if 'twere struck by the hammer o' Thor.

HILDETUA

Oh, Hogwer, how couldst thou? How couldst thou strike him when his back was turned?

HOGWER

Ho! How could I? Ho, ho, ho! (*Kicking the prostrate body.*) Thy charcoal-burning lover is well done for. What is thy will that we do with him, noble Leudigar?

LEUDIGAR (*rising and picking up his sword*)

I will show thee. (*He moves toward HREIDMAR.*)

HILDETUA (*stopping him*)

Stop! Oh, Leudigar, what wilt thou do?

LEUDIGAR

What will I do? Ha! I will show thee. I will cut his flaxen head straight from his pretty shoulders.

HILDETUA

Oh—no, no, Leudigar—spare him! He did spare thee—he did have thee in his power and did spare thee. See he is not dead—he breathes—oh, slay him not!

LEUDIGAR

Bah! Stand away—his soul shall rot in Hell! His soul shall rot in Hell, and then shall I have thee—

HILDETUA

No—no—spare him—oh, slay him not, Leudigar! I—I will be thy maiden. I will be thine, if thou wilt not slay him. Oh, Leudigar, slay him not!

LEUDIGAR

Aye, thou art right—thou wilt be mine, for thou canst not help it. (*To HOGWER.*) Hogwer, thy work is done. Thou shalt be well rewarded. Now get thee gone; Hildetua and I need thee no longer.

HOGWER

Yes—but, noble Leudigar, I—I—

LEUDIGAR

Didst hear me? I did tell thee get thee gone. By the hammer o' Thor, I'll— (*He strides angrily toward HOGWER, who, panic-stricken, flees out the door. Looking after him.*) Ha, ha, ha! By Odin, he flees as if 'twere the Fenris wolf himself after him! (*Turning.*) Yea, sweet Hildetua, thou shalt, indeed, be mine, thou little witch! But first for him. (*He again turns toward HREIDMAR.*)

HILDETUA (*again stopping him and pleading piteously*)

Oh, Leudigar, Leudigar, thou wilt not slay him! Thou dost say thou dost love me. Look, I will be thine—I will love thee! Oh, slay him not!

LEUDIGAR

Bah! I tell thee—

HILDETUA

No—no—no! Look, Leudigar, look! I am Hildetua—Hildetua of the dance. I will love thee—I will dance for thee! I will dance the dance of passion! Leudigar, Leudigar, I will love thee and I will dance!

LEUDIGAR

I will see the dance, but first will I—

HILDETUA (*holding him frenziedly*)

Thou wilt see me dance—thou wilt see me dance—aye, aye, I will dance! Look, look! I am dancing now! Look, look, Leudigar—'tis the dance of passion, the dance of life, the wild dance! No one else shall see it; I will dance it but for thee! And then will I love thee, Leudigar—I will love thee—I will love thee—only thee!

(*As she frenziedly whispers out the above she begins to dance, swaying her arms and body and driving him before her. Held spellbound by her movements, he retreats, and finally sinks down on the broad bench, and his eyes, burning with desire, follow her. Slowly, as the dance proceeds, she begins to speak in a weird, chanting way.*)

Hildetua am I,
Maid of the wild wood.
Hildetua am I,
Maid of the dance.
White frost fire am I,
Born of the mountain crag;
Daughter of Thor am I,
Maid of the dance.

(*Faster and faster grow her movements. Like a sprite she seems; like a flash of frost fire she whirls about.*)

Swift as the avalanche
Roars through the mountains,
Swift as the avalanche,
Maid of the dance.
See, like the ocean gale,
Look to Hildetua!
See, like the wind I whirl,
Maid of the dance!

(*And now the wild dance is at its height. Faster and faster it has gone, until the room has seemed full of flying figures, but now it slows. It was the gale with its wind and rain, but now it is a sunbeam breaking through the clouds. It was winter with its snow and sleet; now it is the breath of spring blowing o'er the meadow land. And now again she continues her chantlike verse.*)

I was the winter king;
Now have I softened.
Now I'm the breath of spring,
Maid of the dance.

Soft like the summer am I,
Wafting love's message;
Infinite love am I,
Maid of the dance.

(*And now she sways with the heavy languor of summer. And now do LEUDIGAR'S eyes, brightened by her storm dance, become heavy-lidded. Gently and lightly she comes toward him with soothing voice.*)

Look to Hildetua,
Look to Hildetua,
Look to Hildetua,
Maid of the dance.

(*And now she is bending over him. He holds out his arms toward her and leans back. She bends over him, holding him with her passionate gaze.*)

Look to Hildetua,
Maid of the dance.

(*He sinks back quite overcome. She snatches from his belt his dagger and stabs him furiously again and again. He rises; a bewildered look comes over his face; and then, gasping and choking blood, he falls. Like one in a dream, she crawls away from him and gazes on her blood-stained hands. The form of HREIDMAR stirs and rises. Gathering his senses, he picks up his sword, and staggering, looks wildly around.*)

HREIDMAR

Where—where is he? Where is Leudigar?

HILDETUA (*in a whisper*)

There—there is he; there is Leudigar.

HREIDMAR (*coming down*)

Why, he is slain! Who—who—
(*Noting her blood-stained hands.*) Thou didst slay him?

HILDETUA

Yea, I—I did slay him—I—Hildetua.

HREIDMAR (*gazing about for a second, then holding out his hand*)

Come—we will away. (*She takes his hand, and they move silently toward the door.*)

CURTAIN

A DEBT OF GRATITUDE

By HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

THE table by the middle window had been reserved for three. Vogel's was full at that hour. There were smart frocks and pretty women and laughter disproportionate to the wit that evoked it, and a hum of voices like the drone of locusts in a summer field. Through this gay company the three late arrivals made their way to their waiting table unnoticed.

They were not of a sort to attract attention, even in less showy assemblies than Vogel's boasted at the height of the season. The woman's hair was prematurely white, and the tracery of her delicate skin suggested suffering physical or mental, perhaps both. She talked much with painstaking vivacity. In her dress, as in her manner, there was an indefinable suggestion of an effort to conform to another's standards. "Now, isn't this regularly jolly?" she exclaimed, as she took her place, and the expression, incongruous on her lips, produced an effect almost pathetic.

Her husband, Oscar Moreland, who looked younger than she, had the closely fitted, rotund figure which is a confession of a struggle between vanity and gluttony. He had small, restless eyes, and a reddish mustache which he caressed affectionately or tugged with impatience, according to the changes of his mood. The third member of the party, Farrel by name, was tall and broad-shouldered, with a dominating ugliness which has for most women a fascination beyond that of beauty. He was a man of long silences, in which there was nothing morose. His smile, which was slow in coming, had a genial warmth, like sunshine.

The meal was a silent one, in spite of the efforts of the white-haired woman, who talked insistently and played with her food. The husband ate hastily and paid little attention to the other members of the party. Farrel listened with kindly gravity to his guest's efforts to be entertaining, and once or twice remonstrated: "You're not eating anything. Come now—to please me."

The meal ended, Moreland pushed back his chair. "I'll find you soon," he said. "There're some fellows here I want to see." He crossed the room with haste, and his wife's volubility dropped from her like a discarded garment. She leaned back in her chair, glancing at her companion with the air of one who is sure of being understood. Indeed, Farrel's look, as it rested on her, was full of sympathetic comprehension.

"Tired, aren't you?" he said. "We'll get away from this racket. There is a porch outside where you can look at the water and rest." He guided her to the retreat he had mentioned, and ensconced her in a rocking chair. The moon was rising, revealing with delicate touches all that was lovely in the landscape, while the shadows hid all the sordid and unsightly. The dew had set free imprisoned fragrances. The woman did not suggest that it was "jolly." She only sank back in her chair, with a deep sighing breath, and closed her eyes.

For a moment Farrel towered over her, big, strong, protecting, and the moonlight disclosed on his rough-hewn features an expression of exquisite gentleness. But when he spoke his words were matter-of-fact.

"I'm going for a cigar. You sit quiet; I'll be back in a minute." As he turned he perceived a small boy beckoning him. Farrel advanced, and the urchin withdrew, still gesticulating violently, with an air of caution amusingly at variance with his contortions.

"Here, kid," said Farrel impatiently, "drop that monkeying and come to business." The boy stole close, still proudly mysterious.

"She tole me to get yer out o' sight o' the old lady 'fore I give it to yer," he explained, and handed over a note. Farrel regarded him thoughtfully a moment, then opened the communication and read it through.

So that's her. Well, I can't say I admire your taste, Oscar boy. Be at the Point at ten o'clock sharp. I've about made up my mind to go with you, and if we're going to take the plunge, what's the good of standing on the bank shivering?

Farrel stood reflecting, then slowly tore the missive into bits. The boy grinned up into his face understandingly.

"She tole me to giv' it to the cove 'long with the old woman in the blue gown," he said, "an' to get yer out of the way fust. An' I done it."

"You're a smart kid, all right," said Farrel. He felt in his pocket for the expected coin, then strode back to Mrs. Moreland, forgetting his cigar. She did not turn at his approach, yet something in her attitude suggested that she was listening for his returning step, and that the sound gave her comfort. He stood beside her chair and spoke briefly and with authority.

"You are to stay here. I'm going to take Oscar canoeing."

"It's a lovely night," she acquiesced, like one accustomed to falling in with the plans of others. "But, Oscar—I'm not sure—"

"Oh, he'll go," said Farrel, thrusting his chin forward, and she laughed gently.

"How sure you are—of yourself and of your ability to make other people do as you wish! I wonder if women ever feel that way? I suppose they do—the beautiful ones."

"Some women can feel pretty sure of some things," said Farrel. "You can be sure of me, for instance." Her answer was to lay her hand lightly upon his sleeve.

"You've been wonderfully good to us, Joe," she said. "Sometimes I'm afraid we're selfish to monopolize you the way we do. I know I'm not entertaining. I try to read up on things, so as to know what to talk about, but even Oscar almost goes to sleep on an evening when we're alone together. That's one of the penalties of married life," she went on with a pathetic effort to speak lightly. "You have to put up with your wife whether she's stupid or not. But you—you're free."

"I have to thank you," said Farrel with deliberation, "for the happiest hours of my life. And perhaps some day I may have a chance to reciprocate, by doing something for which you should thank me." He bent his head over the hand on his sleeve and went away abruptly, leaving her surprised but not startled. She sat smiling to herself as she mused on her good fortune. Old before her time, delicate, uninteresting—she checked off her disadvantages on her fingers—she was nevertheless blessed with a devoted husband and a loyal friend.

She fell asleep in her chair, thinking happy thoughts and wrapped about by the peace of the silvery night. She was wakened by the sound of hurrying feet. Men were running past. Voices sharp with excitement spoke out of the dark. She felt frightened and deserted. Down on the Point she could see bobbing lights.

She rose to her feet and stumbled across the porch. The place seemed empty. The music had stopped. The chill of nameless apprehension clutched her heart. She could have cried out in her relief when she saw a man standing by an open door, straining his eyes in the direction of the Point.

"Has something happened, sir? Can you tell me if anything is wrong?"

He turned quickly, more than glad to be the first to give her the tidings. "Why, yes, ma'am. There's two men

drowned off the Point. Went out in a canoe, and got to fooling, I suppose, as folks will when they've had more to drink than is good for them, and so upset."

"A canoe!" Confidence and terror had grappled in her heart, but as yet confidence had the upper hand. "Oh, it couldn't be!" she gasped.

"What couldn't be?"

"Why, my husband and a friend are out in a canoe. But they would be careful. And even if they upset, Joe would bring him ashore. Oscar can't swim," she babbled on, her face chalky in the moonlight. "But Joe is as much at home in the water as on land." She put her hands to her lips, choking back a cry. "Oh, God! Why don't they come?"

The man took her by the arm. "You'd better come down to the Point, lady," he said with authority. "You might be needed to identify the bodies."

It was the overturned canoe that had first attracted attention. There had been the usual aimless hurrying about, the usual loss of time. When Mary Moreland and her guide reached the Point it was crowded with people, who nevertheless fell back and made way for them to pass. Mrs. Moreland wondered what it was that the man kept saying and why the people cast such pitying looks upon her. For Joe would not let Oscar drown. She clung to that thought with blind, unreasoning faith. Whatever happened, Joe would bring her husband back to her.

A boat was coming in. The other boats were following a little behind. The waiting people were so silent that the splash of the oars in the water struck on the ears like blows. Mrs. Moreland stood on the little strip of sand where the boat's keel grated. She saw them lifting out two limp, dripping bodies, and she ran forward while a man held a lantern so that its light fell upon a sodden face, staring blankly upward. Somewhere a clock struck ten, and a woman in the crowd broke into a shriek of hysteric laughter and

dropped in a faint. They carried her away, the red oval of her painted cheeks showing grotesquely against her deathlike pallor.

Everything was being done that could be done. So at frequent intervals the woman who had taken Mary Moreland in charge gave her assurance as the night dragged on. The doctors had come from the city in automobiles, and hadn't paid any attention to speed laws, she might be sure. And it was really wonderful how often people came to, after having been dead for hours, to all appearances.

Mrs. Moreland gave the assent required, with little evidence of emotion. The woman suggested that it was a singular accident. "Perhaps so," Mrs. Moreland said dully. "I don't know much about accidents."

"I only mean that the water was so still there didn't seem much chance for an upset, if one took ordinary precautions. And didn't you say your husband could swim?"

"Not my husband—at least, he wasn't much of a swimmer. But Joe—Mr. Farrel—was very skillful."

"He was the big man," said the woman understandingly. "He did his best. They say he'd gripped the little man so tightly that they pulled both bodies into the boat together. There, that's right! You'll feel better for a good cry."

But the sharp sound that had broken from Mrs. Moreland's lips had not been the forerunner of tears. "I knew Joe would try," she said simply, and settled herself for the long waiting.

At two o'clock the silence of the building was broken by suggestive sounds, raised voices, hurrying feet, a door shutting sharply somewhere. Mrs. Moreland's companion sprang from her chair. "It sounds as if something had happened," she said unsteadily. "I'll go out and see."

She came back running. "One of them is breathing!" she gasped. "They didn't know which. I suppose one of the doctors will come in just as soon as he can be spared. Oh, you poor soul!" she cried hysterically. "If you

would only give way a little! It would help you through this dreadful time of not being sure."

"One of them," said Mrs. Moreland with white lips, "only one of them!" She folded her hands and sat very still. One man living and one dead. God had made the choice between them. And she must wait to know which.

"Joe hasn't anybody to care," she murmured, staring overhead as if speaking to some invisible Presence, "and Oscar is all I have." The other woman saw her moving lips and shivered.

When the doctor came, his look of pitying sympathy gave his message before a word had been spoken. Mrs. Moreland lost her self-control and cried out. "It is the other," she said—"the other!" She caught his hand. "You'll not give up while there's any hope!" she entreated. "It isn't time to stop hoping yet."

"Everything possible will be done," the physician promised. He felt her pulse, and in an undertone gave some directions to the other woman, wondering with a sense of surprise, not blunted by long professional experience, that this fragile, delicate, guarded creature could show such endurance in suffering.

At the door he paused. "Is Mr. Farrel married?"

"No."

"He spoke a woman's name when he was coming to. He said quite distinctly, 'For Mary's sake.' I thought that perhaps there was someone who should be notified."

"There is no one," said Mrs. Moreland in a hard voice, "to care particularly." Then as the door closed, her tense figure relaxed and her first tears came to her relief.

"Poor Joe!" she whispered brokenly. "He did his best, and I ought to be grateful. It isn't his fault that he's the one to come back. I must never let him know."

"Why don't you marry her?"

Joseph Farrel and his friend and physician, Dr. Gale, sat by a crackling grate fire. The room had the luxuri-

ous comfort characteristic of masculine establishments where ease ranks first. Outside the storm raged. Indoors the flames leaped up the chimney's throat, and rings of tobacco smoke dissolved against the background of tall bookcases and handsome pictures. It was an hour for confidences.

"Why don't you marry her?" Dr. Gale repeated, as his companion made no rejoinder. "She's been a widow for three years now. And it's easy to see how it is with you."

"It's been that way with me for more than three years," said Farrel with deliberation. "The question is, how is it with her?"

"I don't know." The doctor stroked his beard. "But my opinion is that she'll have you if you ask her. She's so overwhelmingly grateful—"

"That's it," Farrel broke in sharply—"that's the devil of it. If it wasn't for her gratitude I'd risk it."

"Don't be an ass, Joe," said the physician with a friend's candor. "You're not a sentimental woman. Take her on any terms, and in a year she'll bow down and worship you. I know the type. As for her gratitude, it does credit to her head as well as to her heart. When you risked your life for that husband of hers you did more than was reasonable. For, from all I hear, he was a common little beast, and anybody but a woman, and a particular sort of woman, at that, would have thought herself well off to be rid of him."

Farrel rose and paced the floor. "I can't let her marry me out of gratitude," he repeated, halting opposite his friend. "Because I wasn't trying to save Oscar Moreland."

"You mean you weren't successful in saving him," the physician corrected him sharply.

"I mean what I say," drawled Farrel, as was his habit when excited. "I meant to drown him, and I did!"

Gale fell back in his chair, past speaking. The other man continued to stride across the room, his hands in his pockets, his strong face drawn into a frown.

"It's not easy to show you things from my standpoint," he said abruptly. "You were right when you called Oscar a beast. All appetites he was, and no soul. He liked food and drink and women, all on the same level. His wife bored him desperately, and she knew it, poor soul, and atoned by worshiping him all the more devoutly. Queer things, women."

He stood before the grate, staring moodily at the flying sparks, and a full moment passed before he took up the thread of his story.

"I'd heard about this other woman, of course, but I supposed it would blow over like his other affairs and no harm done, so that Mary didn't know. But that night at Vogel's a boy brought me a note she meant for Oscar. I saw that things were getting near a crisis that Mary's heart was to be broken, and that she was to be humiliated before the world, every sweet memory, even, poisoned. If I could have believed that it would have killed her, I might have borne it. But she's the sort that lives and lives—and suffers."

He paused to light a fresh cigar. Dr. Gale followed his example, but the hand of the physician shook.

"I got Oscar into the canoe. He didn't want to go, of course, but I made him. And then I opened up. I didn't tell him about the letter. She had written him to come down to the Point at ten, and I suppose they would have laid their plans then. I simply said that the thing had got to stop, and he cursed me for a meddling fool and laughed in my face. And he taunted me with being in love with his wife, and laughed again and said that she'd love him just as much after he'd run off with another woman, and would never look at me. It was all damnably true, too, but injudicious. And at last, when I was tired of listening, I had my say. 'I've given you your chance, Oscar,' I told him, 'and you've rejected it. And now we'll never go ashore—neither of us.'

"That sort of man cuts a poor figure at such a time," observed Farrel dispassionately. "His face was as

white as a sheet before his silly grin had faded out. Then he started to screech for help. I had my fingers on his throat at the first sound, and the canoe went over."

There was a long pause, and again Farrel stood before the grate and watched the flames. Then he looked with grave attention at the white, troubled face of his silent friend.

"Of course, you understand that I was condemning myself as well as him. For both of us I was judge and executioner. I was ready to pay the price, a life for a life. Mary would mourn him, but she would be happy, too, in a way, when nothing could prevent her from idealizing Oscar's memory and making herself believe he had loved her devotedly. And to save her from what I saw before her, I would have stopped at nothing. The only thing I didn't take into account was the possibility of their fishing us out of the water in time to save either of us. I thought I'd made a sure thing of it till the Day of Judgment."

The other man seemed on the point of speaking. Farrel made an appealing gesture. "Wait a minute and I'll have finished. I want you to understand that my conscience hasn't troubled me, not in the way you might have supposed. I'm glad I killed him. I'd do it again, and as quickly as I'd lift my hand, if as much was at stake. But I'll acknowledge that when I found that I was back in this world, and that he was out of it, I was profoundly uncomfortable. I meant to finish up the job, you know, as soon as a good chance came. But I hadn't taken Mary into account."

His voice changed exquisitely. His face, stern but now with strenuous passion, softened till he looked another man.

"She needed me, Gale. She's the helpless sort, one of the women who need a man to turn to in every emergency. And since I was ready to die for her happiness, I would be a sneak to refuse to live, if that's any satisfaction to her. Sometimes I've thought—but that's foolishness, I reckon.

Anyhow, you see that I couldn't run the risk of having her marry me out of a mistaken sense of obligation."

It was Gale's turn. The physician cleared his throat more than once and spoke hoarsely. "You haven't asked

my opinion as to the morals of the case, Farrel, and I won't force it on you. But I will say one thing. In spite of all, I think Mrs. Moreland owes you a debt of gratitude, a bigger one than she dreams of."



A WOMAN'S WAY

By PHILIP A. BARTOLOMAE

Act I

THE MAN: "I love you! Be my wife."
The Woman: "You dear!"

Act II

The Man: "Alas! I find I love another."
The Woman: "Oh, dear!"

Act III.

The Man: "How dare you bring *her* here?"
The Woman: "She's a dear!"

Act IV

The Man: "It's always been only you I loved."
The Woman: "My dear!"



AN amusing story is told at one of the Philadelphia clubs. It seems that an older member thereof, a clever chap, was being frightfully bored by his *vis-à-vis* at table in the café one evening, the latter individual being as dull as the former was bright.

The talk was fast becoming unendurable, when the first-named member chanced to observe a man at the other end of the dining room yawning in a manner that threatened to dislocate his jaw.

"Look!" exclaimed the first member in desperation. "We are overheard."



THE blessings of poverty and the uses of adversity are only appreciated at long range.



DON'T be too good—it isn't polite.

LE ROMAN D'UNE VIOLETTE DE PARME

Par LUCIE DELARUE-MARDRUS

UNE violette de Parme, pareille à toutes les autres, était née en Provence, au revers d'une colline, dans un de ces champs industriels qui alimentent de parfums les fabriques de Grasse. Ses petites compagnes printanières vivaient, comme elle, épanouies au soleil. Leur bonne odeur était leur conversation. Elles y joignaient de mignons saluts, lorsqu'un peu de brise venait. Debout et la tête dans le ciel, à la manière des êtres humains, toutes, elles étaient protégées par quelque feuille ovale et verte; et cela leur donnait tout à fait l'air de porter des ombrelles, comme des dames.

Dans son cerveau minuscule de fleur, ma violette s'enorgueillissait chaque matin de sentir, sur sa tête sombre, un clair chapeau de rosée. Elle se raidissait alors, pour ne pas laisser tomber le faix de cette grosse goutte précieuse qui brillait, au soleil du Midi, comme un diamant d'au moins un demi-carat. Mais un souffle passait; la violette saluait et le diamant tombait. Et, chaque matin, c'était pour la fragile ambitieuse, une déception. Car elle n'avait pas absolument le même caractère que ses camarades.

Peut-être cela venait-il de ce qu'elle était très enfoncée dans ses feuilles et seule sur son plan. En effet, sa mère, étant enceinte de ses graines, avait péri de mort violente, ne laissant sur la terre que cette seule fille qui, par hasard, avait germé et fleuri, mais complètement isolée.

Aussi ne prenait-elle point toujours part aux plaisirs de la jeunesse. Mieux

abritée par ses feuilles, elle dansait avec plus de réserve que les autres, les jours de mistral; et, aux instants marqués par la visitation des papillons, elle n'accordait que de très rares rendez-vous. C'est pourquoi elle ne s'était pas encore fiancée.

Elle laissait donc ses sœurs, chiffonnées et dociles, subir, fixes sur leur tige, le va-et-vient des infidèles insectes, ces violettes ailées. Mais si elle flirtait peu avec les importants bourdons à grosse voix et les guêpes bien corsetées, elle avait su, sans avoir l'air de rien, conquérir l'amitié d'un grillon déjà âgé et plein de belles et secrètes qualités.

Ce grillon était presque un inconnu pour la foule des autres violettes. D'ailleurs, comme le sont en général les personnes très savantes, il était d'aspect plutôt revêché. Mais, nonobstant ce physique défavorable, on découvrait, en le fréquentant, que, dans son corps exigu et sec comme une brindille de foin, vivait tout entière la grande âme des campagnes au soleil.

En outre, il connaissait tant d'autres choses! Il avait habité les vastes cheminées des hommes, devant lesquelles s'assoient les familles, et aussi les foyers brûlants où cuit leur pain quotidien. De sorte que, bestiole perdue dans l'immensité des champs provençaux, sa petite crécelle naturelle, certains jours, tenait à la violette des discours de philosophe.

—Le destin d'une fleur, lui déclarait-il souvent, peut être encore autre chose que la vie et la mort au soleil. Il est

possible, pour elle, de rêver un au-delà merveilleux par lequel elle acquiert une âme presque humaine. Je ne veux pas t'en révéler plus long. Mais, sans doute, toi qui es une jolie violette double plus réfléchie que les autres, toi qui sais qu'une goutte d'eau sur ta tête a le poids d'une fugace pierrerie, tu connaîtras un jour cet au-delà dont je ne peux te parler davantage, ne voulant pas trahir les secrets des humains.

Et la violette, durant les longues heures du jour, penchait sa compliquée petite figure végétale, et rêvait indéfiniment.

Or, une aube vint où une troupe de femmes du peuple, envoyée par une des fabriques, pénétra dans le champ, et, en quelques heures, cueillit, sans en excepter une, toutes les violettes de Parme.

Et les pauvrettes, brusquement arrachées de leur terroir, jetées pêle-mêle dans des paniers, faisaient, entre elles, des réflexions épouvantées. Beaucoup s'évanouirent dans la catastrophe. Les autres disaient :

—Voici donc l'heure de mourir! Nous étions pourtant toutes jeunes encore! Hélas! . . . Hélas! . . .

Car ces frères personnes, hautes de deux ou trois centimètres, aimaient autant la vie que les grandes créatures de Dieu.

Ma violette, pourtant, ne disait rien. Mais elle pensait :

—Je m'envole enfin de la tige qui me retenait prisonnière. Me voici libre et détachée comme une belle mouche bleue. C'est l'au-delà qui commence, sans doute! . . . Adieu ma colline natale! Adieu mon grillon, mon cher grillon! C'est ta parole infatigable qui m'a appris que tout n'est pas fini le jour de la mort . . .

Faut-il raconter toutes les phases par lesquelles passèrent les milliers de camarades cueillies, une fois entrées dans l'effrayante et noire demeure où se poursuit et s'achève la lente histoire des fleurs qui deviennent des parfums?

Elles déferlèrent, comme une immense vague embaumée, à travers des chambres nues; elles passèrent par des

maines affairées d'ouvriers, roulèrent dans de nouveaux paniers, et enfin, encore vivantes et mouillées d'aurora méridionale, elles se virent, par masses compactes, au milieu des sifflements et des trépidations de la vapeur. Elles furent disposées sur un appareil de forme inattendue qui, ainsi fleuri, figura, pour une seconde, un imposant cône de fraîcheur violette.

Et la rêveuse élève du grillon, à ce moment, se dit :

—Voilà donc l'au-delà promis! Que notre solidarité est splendide! A nous toutes, nous avons réalisé cette beauté!

Elle n'avait pas fini sa pensée que, soudain, par quelque déclenchement, le cône chargé de fleurs plongea d'un seul coup dans l'enfer d'une cuve de pétrole bouillant.

Instant indescriptible! Quand l'appareil ressortit de la cuve, il ne restait plus, autour du cône géant, qu'un amas informe, incolore, inodore. Car, à chaque fleur, le pétrole avait arraché son parfum comme une petite âme. Et, si absolument vidés étaient les imperceptibles cadavres, qu'on les jeta séance tenante dans un coin, bons pour l'égout.

Cependant, l'âme de la violette, au milieu d'une si terrible métaphysique, continuait à vivre et à réfléchir. Car, à travers l'horreur des cuves, tuyaux et alambics, elle était, à elle toute seule, la conscience du vaste champ originel.

Il est impossible de répéter en détail les mille péripéties de l'essence naissante. Sachons seulement qu'un matin ce fut, pour ce champ originel, l'heure de la résurrection finale. Et cette résurrection, après le martyr varié de la fabrique, éclatait au soleil du printemps sous les espèces d'un flacon de triple extrait authentique.

Ainsi s'était donnée toute une colline de violettes, pour ajouter une riche fiole aux divers accessoires qui, saugrenus, coûteux et charmants, brillent dans l'armoire des hommes coquets et des belles Parisiennes.

Et voici que, réveillées, assimilées les unes aux autres, plus proches encore qu'aux jours de leur vie végétale, les menues compagnes d'autrefois, libérées de leur tout petit corps, se remirent,

sous cette forme liquide, à bavarder entre elles, heureuses de se reconnaître et de se retrouver, quoique vraiment trop à l'étroit.

Et les souvenirs qu'elles évoquaient, souvenirs du temps où les papillons les aimaient, étaient tellement plus intenses que ne l'avait été cette vie première, que leur causerie, sous forme de parfum, traversait le verre du flacon et se répandait dans toute l'armoire.

Cependant, ma violette ne parlait pas, ayant gardé, intacte, son âme native. Ainsi transformée, elle se sentait, goutte précieuse, pareille au chapeau de rosée qui la coiffait jadis. Et elle attendait toujours, fervente et sans impatience; car, à travers l'infamale aventure, elle n'avait pas oublié la parole de son grillon.

Un jour, une main prit le flacon dans l'armoire. Une belle jeune dame en fit sauter les diverses enveloppes, et ouvrit. Et l'esprit collectif des violettes, comme un magnifique papillon d'autrefois, invisible et plus léger, se mit à voler de-ci, de-là, dans la chambre, si présent, malgré qu'on ne pût le voir, que la jeune dame en poussa un petit cri.

Elle dit avec extase :

— Quelle bonne essence!

Et, ayant précieusement incliné le flacon sur son mouchoir, une grosse goutte se répandit sur le linge fin et l'imbiba d'un rond humide. Et cette goutte n'était autre que la violette pensive, à qui un au-delà merveilleux avait été promis.

— Voilà certainement le bonheur, pensa la violette.

Mais elle ne se sentait pas particulièrement heureuse. Fil par fil, elle avançait sur le mouchoir blanc. La belle jeune femme l'avait enfoncé dans un manchon où ses petites mains se tenaient aussi, sagement réunies. On voyageait. Ensuite, la violette vit des choses nouvelles : un salon ou beaucoup de dames, compliquées et délicates

comme des fleurs, saluaient de droite et de gauche, pendant que quelques rares messieurs, noirs et déliés comme des insectes, allaient et venaient de l'une à l'autre.

Et la pauvre petite pensait :

— Pourquoi mon ami le grillon ne m'avait-il pas dit que la vie des humains était toute pareille à celle d'un champ de violettes?

Tout à coup, les mains de la belle jeune femme, occupées d'un tasse de thé, laissèrent tomber, sans s'en apercevoir, le mouchoir et la goutte d'odeur qui l'habitait.

Alors, une autre main, celle d'un jeune homme, ramassa ce mouchoir avec précaution et le cacha vivement dans la poche d'un gilet. On sentait, à travers l'obscurité de cette poche, les grands coups d'un cœur.

Or, lorsque vint le soir, seul et enfermé chez lui, le jeune homme reprit doucement le mouchoir et se prit à le respirer et à le baiser, avec des frissons qui ressemblaient à des sanglots.

Et sa voix entrecoupée murmurait, et sa pensée disait :

— O parfum, parfum de celle que j'aime! O goutte de violette! Te voici, comme un fantôme plein de grâce, sous ma bouche! . . . Quand je te respire, ô parfum de celle que j'aime, tu me redis son regard, sa voix, son geste, plus encore, tout l'inexprimé de sa très chère personne. . . . Je t'aime, ô goutte de violette, perle qui contiens, comme la mer, tout mon désir! . . . O parfum, haleine de son baiser, ô toi qui me rends, pour une seconde, la bien-aimée créature, je t'aime, présence réelle, goutte de violette, âme et chair de l'adorée! . . .

Alors, la chétive violette, répandue sur le linge fin du mouchoir, comprit enfin le mystère des paroles anciennes. Et, saluant du fond de l'absence son ami le grillon, elle sentit que l'heure de son bonheur était venue, puisque l'Amour, comme à un être humain, lui donnait à elle, humble petite fleur, une âme immortelle.



LOVE

By TERRELL LOVE HOLLIDAY

LOVE is an itching which for a time it seemeth but one person could scratch. But, lo, when that person declineth, thou findest that there are others just as good.

Love is the kinetoscope which depicteth many maids in rapid succession as the only girl in the world.

Love is the laughing camera through which the skinny, gimlet-nosed, thin-lipped virago looketh alluringly plump and harmless. Through it the circus fat lady appeareth to have Venus backed out of the Beauty Show.

Love is the flavoring extract which maketh the spoiled lemon to taste like the ripe peach. Likewise it causeth the peach which thou hast to pucker thy lips as a green persimmon when thou thinkest of the peach which thou might have, were thy basket not already full.

Of love there are many kinds.

There is the love which leadeth thee among rathskeller tables and beside bubbling joy waters, and the love which sitteth alone by the fireside and warmeth thy slippers, while the feet belonging therein track small *suede* pumps down the primrose path.

There is the love to which a man is born, that applieth the back of the hair-brush to the patch on his trousers and mendeth his torn shirt.

And the love which he achieveth after a weary pursuit and much bickering with the "also rans."

And the love which overtaketh him and thrusteth itself upon him.

There is the love which inspireth a man to beat his wife, and that which hypnotizeth her with admiration for the strength of the arm that wieldeth the club.

Yea, there are an hundred kinds of love. And the man who hath all but one forsaketh the ninety-nine and goeth forth into the outer darkness in pursuit of the one which he hath not. And when he returneth, chilled and footsore, the ninety-nine—like foolish sheep—butt him not to death. Nay, they warm him with their fleeces and lick the stone bruise upon his heel.

THE MACKAYE MYSTERY

By H. L. MENCKEN

IF you were to ask me to name the best dramatic poet that the United States has yet produced, I should nominate Percy Mackaye without the slightest hesitation, and if, in the same breath, you were to demand the name of the worst dramatic critic now living among us I should nominate Mackaye again. Let me hasten to assure you that I am not seeking by such veiled comparisons to blast the honorable fame or discourage the honest striving of any other man. One beholds in this fair republic a multitude of bad dramatic critics. Every newspaper of any pretensions employs one, and some of them, it must be confessed, are so inordinately skillful in certain specialties and sub-departments of badness that they run Mackaye a hard race. William Winter, to choose but a single example, is fully as bigoted as he, and twice as moral, and four times as hunkerous, and sixteen times as evangelical. Winter seems to me, indeed, to be the greatest living virtuoso of homiletic lachrymosity, an incomparable and almost superhuman toreador of virtue, a Parkhurst multiplied by Comstock, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and Orison Swett Marden. I always think of him as writing upon a sort of extra sensitive litmus paper, which breaks into scarlet blushes every time he puts the name of Paula Tanqueray upon it.

But from all this frenzy for chemical purity, with its unmatchable potentiality for badness, one must subtract the ancient Winter's exceedingly agreeable style, his coherent if elemental processes of ratiocination and the hearty masculinity of his rages. He is, in brief, amusing as well as irritating—a critic

whose abundant graces sometimes obscure the plain fact that he is usually wrong. Mackaye, as a bad critic, shows no such corrupting merits. He is bad all over, from head to heels—atrociously and intolerably bad. A diligent search of his one volume of critical fulminations, "The Playhouse and the Play," fails to discover a single excuse for its composition and printing. It is of weak, Harvardian platitudes all compact, and it is written in an affected, sophomoric, highfalutin' style that would do discredit to the valedictorian of a class of divinity students.

But when we flee from Mackaye the critic to Mackaye the dramatist it is a very different Mackaye that we encounter. This playwriting fellow is well worth knowing and heeding. He is a fluent and colorful writer, a master of verbal magic, a skillful dramatic craftsman, a true maker and singer. There are passages in "The Canterbury Pilgrims" and "Sappho and Phaon" that have been excelled by no English dramatic poet of the day; there are whole scenes, in every one of his plays, that show striking and numerous beauties. Saving only Stephen Phillips, indeed, Mackaye of the blank verse has no serious rival among us, and even beyond the lingual frontiers there are few living men who have surpassed him.

How it happens that so splendid a maker of dramas is, at the same time, so puerile and vapid a critic of the drama I'm sure I don't know. The combination, however, is common, just as the combination of good critic and bad dramatist is common. Mr. Walkley, for example, is the first of living dramatic critics, and yet I am certain that it

would tax him to the utmost to produce even so childish a dramatic composition as the first act of "The Lion and the Mouse," or the last act of "Camille," or the whole of Mr. Winter's favorite, "Jim the Penman." And, on the side of Mackaye, there is Henry Arthur Jones, another excellent dramatist who begins to cackle inanely every time he ventures into dramatic criticism. The dramatist plus critic, in truth, is a rare bird. I can think of Ben Jonson, John Dryden and G. B. S., but no other—at least at the moment. In music there is the same tale to tell. Schumann, Berlioz and Wagner were great as composers and great as critics. Who else?

But I started out, not to discuss psychological and artistic mysteries, but to praise Mackaye. The excuse is offered by the publication, after a wait of ten or twelve years, of his earliest play, a "dramatic reverie" begun during his student days at Harvard and finished "at the Villa Aldobrandini, Frascati, near Rome," and now issued under the title of "A GARLAND TO SYLVIA" (*Macmillan*, \$1.25). "A GARLAND TO SYLVIA" has not yet seen the boards, and there is good reason to doubt that it ever will, for its stage directions would tax even the ingenious Belasco, but it so pleased E. H. Sothern, the actor, when it was submitted to him long ago, that he commissioned Mackaye to write a comedy for him, and the result was "The Canterbury Pilgrims." Incidentally, it won for its author a long and encouraging article from the pen of a New York dramatic critic, which proves that there are good critics in America as well as bad ones.

The plot of this charming little piece is simple enough, though here and there the lush imagination of the young poet tends to obfuscate it a bit. The central figure is Felix Cloudsley, a poetizing college senior, whom we may accept quite frankly, I suppose, as Mackaye himself. Felix, to put it in plain English, is Shakespeare drunk. He has steeped himself in the gorgeous word music of the peerless bard as Thackeray once steeped himself in Addison's Haydnesque prose. Thoughts fall, in his

mind, into sonorous Shakespearean verse; the world about him is peopled with the ghosts of Falstaff and Rosalind, Dogberry and Hermione, the Gobbos and Viola; the paths he treads in his evening walks lead him infallibly to the Forest of Arden or the coast of Bohemia.

What more natural, then, than that he should attempt a drama in the Shakespearean manner, and that he should make that most elusive of Shakespearean charmers, the Sylvia of "Who is Sylvia?" its heroine? And what more natural, after he has accompanied her through a couple of acts, than that he should fall head over heels in love with her? But too late, too late! His own play is against him. The dramatist has played a foul trick upon the lover. For in the third act Sandrac, a hateful Oxford don, wins Sylvia in fair joust with half a dozen other suitors, and Sandrac is now making loud (and quite reasonable) demands that she come to his arms and be his love, and submit her Cupid's bow of a mouth to his hot, hymeneal kisses. What is poor Felix to do? Is Sylvia, in truth, lost to him forever? Pondering the problem gloomily he falls into a reverie, and from his reverie he passes into a land of shadows, and there his Sylvia meets him and kisses him and bids him be of hope.

A way out! Sylvia finds it! Taking Felix by the hand, she leads him to the fount of Lethe, guarded by its three Mist Mothers, and the two fill a flask from its waters. Then they fare back to Sylvia's home, where Sandrac awaits his bride. The wedding feast has begun and Sandrac joins the company in a health to Sylvia. As Hikrion, Sylvia's father, pours out the wine for him into a wooden cup "Felix reaches over his shoulder and drops into the cup liquid from his own flask." Sandrac drinks to the dregs—and at once a darkness falls and he begins to fade to a shadow. The other folk at the feast fade, too—all save Felix and Sylvia. As the curtain comes down we see them hand in hand, and a choir of sylvan sprites, led by a satyr, sings Shakespeare's song to Sylvia.

So much for the plot and machinery of the masque. Its chief beauties, of

course, are beauties of detail—the rich luxuriance of the verse, the Elizabethan color of the incidental lyrics, the reality and rotundity of the personages, the fragrant, faery atmosphere. The purpose of such a fantasy is to create a mood, and that purpose the young poet achieves most creditably. One strolls with him into a land that never was—a land of day dreams, of shepherds piping in grassy dells of deep enchanted woods, of bird song, of young love and young lovers. It is, in fine, the Forest of Arden. I know of no more striking imitation, in this unpoetical age, of the sixteenth century Shakespeare—not the serious, self-conscious metaphysician of the bald dome and coat-of-arms, but the light-hearted devil of the 1590's and the early comedies. Into his later plays, of course, Mr. Mackaye has put more from his own mind and less from his reading, but into none has he put more charm.

The masque proper, save for a single scene, is written in Dante's *terza rima*, a limpid and graceful form. The odd scene is written in Shakespearean sonnets, while the dialogue which introduces and elucidates the masque is either in prose or in decasyllabic blank verse. Mr. Mackaye handles all of these forms with resourcefulness and skill, taking full advantage of "the amazingly loose conditions which Shakespeare claimed." It is, of course, the work of a very young man that we have before us—he was but twenty-two when it was begun—and now and then a touch of amusing *gaucherie* makes us remember the fact with distinctness; but taking it by and large, it is work that needs no apology. But why, oh, why, did Mackaye the poet permit Mackaye the bad critic to disfigure so delightful a little book with a pompous and piffish preface?

"CIVILIZATION," says James J. Hill, in his new book, "HIGHWAYS OF PROGRESS" (Doubleday-Page, \$1.50), "is mostly the story of the triumph of the human stomach in its struggle for food sufficient for the work of physical and mental evolution." Here we have what seems to be a frank acceptance of the

Marxian "materialistic conception of history," the cornerstone of Socialism, but Mr. Hill, it quickly appears, is far from a Socialist. In so far as the management of railroads is concerned, in truth, he is the very opposite, for he sets up an eloquent plea, not for their further regulation, but for their complete and immediate liberation from State interference. It may be said for him that this plea of his is supported by a good many very ingenious arguments. He shows clearly, for example, how his effort to build up a large and profitable trade with the Orient was nullified by one stroke of a bureaucratic pen. In order to tempt the Mongolians to buy from us he established huge steamship lines on the Pacific, and made extremely low freight rates on the Great Northern Railway, from the Middle West to the Pacific ports. These rates were adjusted to the circumstances of each large shipment; when a new commodity appeared at the trackside it was hauled as cheaply as possible, sometimes even at a down-right loss; the object was not to make immediate profits, but to blaze a new caravan route across the northern wilderness and a new steamer lane across the lonely western seas. But the Interstate Commerce Commission could understand no such epic planning. It saw only the letter of the law, and that letter forbade the wet nursing of new traffics. A barrel of flour was a barrel of flour. The price for carrying it across the Rockies must be the same to all, no matter what its ultimate destination and no matter how salubrious the moral effect of its sale. And so perished Hill's fine scheme for widening Uncle Sam's markets. The Commission made him charge the full published rate upon all shipments and it was no longer possible to tempt the wily Oriental with bargains.

Mr. Hill prints tables showing how this baleful ruling emptied his ships and laid up his freight cars. He then proceeds to estimate the net loss to the people of the United States—and here he quickly goes aground. The sale of millions of barrels of American flour in the Far East, he says, would have lifted

the price of American wheat in the home market from five to seven cents, and on a yield of 650,000,000 bushels a year, he proceeds to argue, this would have meant "a clear gain of at least \$32,500,000 in the national wealth"—a plain absurdity, for the people of the United States and not the Chinese would have had to pay that extra sum into the pockets of the farmers, and so the gain to the nation, as a nation, would have been little, if anything. The only effect visible to the average American, indeed, would have been a further increase in the cost of living, a consummation devoutly not to be wished.

Mr. Hill is on safer ground when he discourses upon the appalling waste of our natural resources, a subject to which he has evidently given long and thoughtful attention. He estimates that the population of the United States will be 204,041,223 in 1950 and that these unfortunate folk will have to scramble hard for a living. The Pennsylvania anthracite fields, he says, will be exhausted in fifty years and our iron ore will last little longer. Meanwhile, unless the productivity of our farms vastly increases we will soon have to import a lot of wheat, rye, cabbages, alfalfa and other victuals. Our farms now yield but twelve or fifteen bushels of wheat to the acre. In England, upon land farmed for 2,000 years, the yeomen raise thirty; in France and Germany, the more assiduous soil ticklers produce even more. Mr. Hill sounds a solemn warning. We must devote more land to crops and less to national parks, game preserves, golf links and military cemeteries; we must have more farmers and better ones; we must cease our prodigal waste of riches. If we keep on as we are going our grandchildren will be ravaged by famines.

FROM Hill the dismal economic Jokanaan let us turn to Hill the frenzied financier. We come upon him in the third volume of Gustavus Myers's "HISTORY OF THE GREAT AMERICAN FORTUNES" (*Kerr*, \$1.50). It is not the ponderous and bewhiskered sage of today that we behold, but a brisk young fellow with a talent for annexing the

elusive dollar. He appears in the specific role of a railroad wrecker and gobbler—accumulating the bonds of little roads, bearing them artistically by discreet chicanery, foreclosing the mortgages and then buying in the rusty tracks. Soon we find him in complete control of a line stretching from St. Paul to the heart of Manitoba, part of it made up of gobbled roads and part of connecting links built with the profits of gobbling. George Stephen and Donald A. Smith, Canadians like himself, are his partners in the game. Today Stephen is the puissant Lord Mount-Stephen, a magnifico of the English peerage, and Smith is Lord Strathcona. Hill himself is so rich that he can afford to wear his hair long and write books on political economy. An interesting and even enthralling tale of scheming and dreaming! The story of a gobbler with imagination!

Mr. Myers is a painstaking historian and the three volumes of his history so far issued are among the most entertaining books I have ever encountered. He supports his accusations with references to chapter and verse, with affidavit, Bertillon measurement and thumb print. He has plowed through hundreds of dreary reports of Congressional whitewashing committees, through thousands of volumes of court reports, through the moldering files of scores of newspapers. The result is a clear exposition of the manner in which the greater fortunes of the United States have been accumulated—by robbing the Indian, by slave trading, by bribing city councils, State legislatures and the national Congress, by juggling poor folks' money in the banks, by blackjacking the government in time of war, by wrecking railroads, by selling wooden nutmegs and embalmed bacon, by defrauding the customs, by hoggishness and felony of innumerable varieties. Mr. Myers is a Socialist and so his own story makes him extremely indignant. I can well understand that indignation of his (for even the anti-Socialist reader must develop some measure of it), but all the same it seems to me that it leads him into a one-sided and erroneous reading of history. In other words, he proves,

by ample evidence, that nine-tenths of the great fortunes of the United States have been amassed by fraud and corruption—and then proceeds to the quite unwarranted conclusion that the country would have been the gainer had they not been amassed at all.

To this conclusion I cannot follow him. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that the growth of great fortunes has been of enormous *net* advantage to the United States—that is to say, that the average American has gained thereby a good deal more than he has lost. True enough, he has been looted unmercifully, day in and day out, but the money thus wrested from him by guile has been spent for national comforts and conveniences in which, in the main, he fully shares. Because the original Pullman crowd was made up of pitiless and cunning fellows, travel in the United States is now more comfortable than travel in any other land. Because John D. Rockefeller has no conscience, cerebro-spinal meningitis is now (through the agency of the Rockefeller Institute) a curable disease. Because J. Pierpont Morgan was once free to pillage the plain people, the plain people are now free to get whatever stimulation comes from the contemplation of a great art collection. Because the early railroad magnates were bribers and thieves, every part of our fair country is now open to the settler.

In other words, the money wrested from the public by billionaires is not money thrown into the sea. All but a small part of it remains among us and is constantly at work for us. The American people, as a people, still own it. All that has happened to it is that it has been transferred from one pocket to another—from that pocket which pays for kegs of beer, crayon portraits, patent medicines, plush sofas and the other delights of the proletariat to that pocket which pays for railroad systems, art galleries, orchestras, cathedrals, hospitals and universities. It has been turned, in brief, from more or less bad uses to more or less good uses. A keg of beer, once emptied, is merely so much garbage, but a Johns Hopkins Hospital,

once established and endowed, has a permanent and cumulative value.

It is commonly argued, I am well aware, that if the common people were not robbed so sedulously by the trusts they would have more money to pay in taxes, and that the state would thus have funds enough to do the civilizing work now done by malefactors. That argument, it seems to me, is purely academic. What difference does it make to the common people whether their money is extracted from them by the government or by peculiarly enterprising private citizens, so long as a fair portion of it is spent for their good? The first method, it so happens, is the more convenient one under a monarchy and the second is the more convenient one under a democracy. That is the only difference between the two. Under the Second Empire the earthlings of France were taxed unmercifully by Napoleon III, and the result was the magnificent Paris we know today. Under our American democracy we proletarians have been taxed unmercifully by John D. Rockefeller, and the result is that we no longer die copiously of cerebro-spinal meningitis, as we once did, and will soon cease to die, it seems probable, of pneumonia and cancer. What are the odds? All progress is made under the direction of the higher castes—but at the expense of the lower. In order that Koch might discover the tuberculosis germ and Nietzsche might deliver his wallops at superstition and Bismarck might create a nation, the peasants of Prussia, through many long years, had to be content with a good deal less *dunkel* and a good deal less *sauerbraten* than they yearned for in their secret hearts.

IVAN TREPOFF, author of "FORSAKEN" (Cochrane, \$1.25), gives fair warning, in a preface signed "The Publisher," that his story is powerful stuff. "People of soft sensibilities, narrow prejudices and sickly sentimentality," he says, had better not tackle it, and "mollycoddles and weaklings" are frankly advised to shun it as a pestilence. Mr. Trepoff, going further, enumerates other classes that will find

it too strong for them—"pious preachers," for example, and "aged spinsters of puritanical proclivities." The former, he opines, will "say that the ethics of the book are monstrous" and the latter, he hints, will blush themselves into dangerous fevers if they read it. Even ordinary, everyday prudes will find it "frightfully immodest."

Mr. Trepoff is right. His story is powerful, not to say diaphoretic. Never since duty forced me, a *naïf* and modest man, to read Hutchins Hapgood's "An Anarchist Woman" have I come upon fiction of a more assertive medical flavor or, perhaps, I had better say, pathology with a thinner coating of fiction. In the very first chapter, which introduces us to a wedding, the bridegroom is described, not as the ordinary novelist would describe him, but as a coroner's physician might describe him. We learn, before we know even his name, that his scalp is visible "through dry crinkly hair," that "a bluish discoloring vein (*sic*) near the outer angle of the eyelid" accentuates the thinness of his eyebrow, and that other strange marks of disease are all over him. In the second chapter we are illuminated as to the nature of his malady, and for several chapters following we follow the development of its symptoms. The author grows so absorbed in the subject that he unconsciously retains the vocabulary of the clinic, even when speaking of other things. In describing the bride at the wedding, for example, he informs us ingenuously that "at the root of her neck a slight elevation outlined her collarbone," and later on, when he desires to give us a vivid picture of the bridegroom at a dramatic moment, he goes straightway to the accident ward for his figure of speech and tells us that the poor fellow "looked like a man who had been shot in the abdomen."

It is obvious that this book is for medical practitioners only. The layman will get little entertainment out of it and less information. He is not familiar enough with the aspect of gentlemen shot in the abdomen. Tell him that the hero resembles a man sliced with a dull razor, or kicked with a No. 12

shoe, or bruised by a falling oil painting entitled "Mother and Child," or knocked down by an automobile, or chewed by an Irish setter—and at once a familiar and realistic image arises before his mind's eye. But it is so seldom that he sees a man pierced by bullets, either below or above the diaphragm, that no very vivid picture of the spectacle sticks in his memory, and so it lacks illustrative value.

Toward the middle of his book, Mr. Trepoff abandons morbid anatomy and goes in for rough and tumble fighting in the deserts of Africa. More than once he seems to be in some doubt, in this part, as to what it is all about. At the end the film runs fast and we jump from Fifth Avenue to Algeria in half a page. A strange tale! An unprecedented and unearthly mixture of rhetoric and pathogenic spirilla—of laughing gas and ipecacuanha!

ANOTHER novelist who sounds a solemn warning in his preface is A. S. M. Hutchinson, the English author of "ONCE ABOARD THE LUGGER—" (*Kennerley*, \$1.50), but in this case the warning is addressed, not to the "people of soft sensibilities" and "aged spinsters of puritanical proclivities" of the devilish Trepoff, but to those potential readers who possess, in an exaggerated degree, the universal human fancy for the improper. (Do I hear an indignant protest? Am I libeling the human race? Am I ascribing to others, unjustly and against the facts, my own hearty relish for the great deeds of the estimable Gargantua? I think not. As I have hinted by the use of the word "exaggerated," there are undoubtedly considerable differences of degree in the taste for the salacious, and not many persons are so wholly its slaves as some of our lady novelists, but if you will find me a human being, young or old, male or female, pious or sinful, in whom that taste does not appear at all, I shall show you a human being of a species hitherto unknown in the world. Why is impropriety so infernally fascinating? Why do sedate old ladies, who would faint at the mere mention of "Tom Jones" and fall

shrieking into the aisles if the first scene of "Romeo and Juliet" were actually played upon the stage—why do such estimable ancients show so much interest in medical, and particularly obstetrical anecdote? I'm sure I don't know. No doubt the answer will be found after the allied problem as to the nature and genesis of modesty has been satisfactorily solved. So far as I am aware, no psychologist has ever explained modesty in a comprehensible fashion. Havelock Ellis essayed the task—and then gave it up as hopeless. The lower animals have no sense of modesty and no fancy for the obscene. The two facts may be unrelated, but there are sound enough reasons for believing them to be brothers. The taste for impropriety has nothing whatever to do with the sense of humor, though both sometimes get stimulation out of the same event. Some of the lower animals—the dogs, for example—have a very keen sense of humor and a great relish for horseplay, but it is impossible to discern in them any conception of indecency.)

But to return to Mr. Hutchinson and his solemn warning. He addresses it, as I have said, to all who demand a riotous slaughter of the commandments, and particularly of the seventh, in every novel they read. "ONCE ABOARD THE LUGGER—" is not for that sort of connoisseur. "There are," says Mr. Hutchinson, "no problems in this history, nor is the reader to be tickled by any risks taken with nice deportment. This history may be kept upon shelves that are easily accessible. It is true that you will be invited to spend something of a night in a lady's bedroom, but the matter is carried through with circumspection and dispatch. There shall not be a blush."

The story, it must be admitted, bears out the promises of the prospectus. It deals, not with the polygamy of the fourth decade nor with the pessimism of the fifth, but with the optimistic monogamy of the third—with the honest love, in brief, of three-and-twenty. It is a light and romantic tale, a tale which leaves a pleasant flavor. We are intro-

duced into the household of Mr. Christopher Marrapit, a fantastic dragon made of a leg and an eye from Dickens, a brow and a brisket from Meredith and so on, and we are made privy to the love of his fair daughter, Margaret, for young William Wyvern, a rising journalist, and of his nephew, George, for the sweet and unfortunate Mary Humfray. George is a medical student who has staggering difficulties with his examinations and pins all faith upon getting money enough out of his uncle to buy a practice. Mary is an orphan from Ireland who finds the folk of England inhuman. It is the business of the story to tell us how a cab accident shoots Mary into George's arms, how he tracks her home, how he rescues her dramatically from a villain, how he wins her innocent love, how he manages to overcome his close-fisted uncle, and how, in the end, he and his Mary are united in holy matrimony. Incidentally, we go to the wedding of Margaret and William, too, and so the curtain falls to the strain of harps and muted fiddles. An old-fashioned, simple-hearted, dephlogisticated, Victorian romance, with plenty of elemental humor in it and a number of very agreeable people.

"ELISABETH DAVENAY," by Claire de Pratz (*Kennerley*, \$1.50), belongs to the fast growing literature of woman's suffrage, and like H. G. Wells's "Ann Veronica" it is a study of the suffragette in love. What is the dear girl to do when her duty to the Sacred Cause pulls one way and her yearning to be smothered in kisses by a Certain Hideous Male pulls the other? Ann Veronica frankly yielded to the man, and was apparently glad of it ever thereafter, but Elisabeth Davenay, after a long struggle, sends him away. "I had two paths," she writes to him, "to choose from—either to devote my energy to what is undisguisedly my duty as a human being or to yield to the urgings of personal passion. . . . I find that my work is in reality the stronger. . . . If I linked my future with yours, I should hinder you as you would hinder me. . . . The past has held sweet hours for us, dear—has it not?

Let it live for us in our memories." And so Elisabeth goes to London to become one of the editors of a great suffragette daily and André Nortier goes back to his lecturing and his piano playing. Mlle. de Pratz's story is a good deal less vivid and engaging than Mr. Wells's, but all the same it shows no little insight into character and no little accuracy of observation. The central problem of the woman's movement, after all, is the sex problem. Are women ready to give up the ancient privileges of their sex—the right to be wooed and won and petted and protected, the right to face the world behind a breastwork of men, the right to reason by emotion? Are they really fit to grapple with reality? In the case of Elisabeth Davenay one somehow feels that, soon or late, she will come back to her André. She is no rawboned she-ruffian, in goggles and a union suit, but an essentially feminine woman, pretty, well gowned and rather more than half romantic. As for André, he is a fellow that any woman might view with a flutter. He is successful, he is domineering, he has good looks—and he loves the eighteenth century composers and "the delicate and intricate lacework" of their music. Find me a man who rejoices in Haydn and I will show you a man that any sane woman should be proud to hug.

"THE ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE," the latest of E. Phillips Oppenheim's galloping tales (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), shows all of his customary ingenuity. As the curtain rises we see an American diplomatic agent arriving in England with papers which bring functionaries high and low to their knees before him, their foreheads touching the floor. Then we see him lying dead, with a knife through his heart. Then we are introduced to a crafty Japanese prince, a near relative to the Mikado, and learn all about the world cruise of the American battleship fleet. And finally we have a lot of love making and more international intriguing—and an entirely unexpected tableau at the close. Of that sort of thing Mr. Oppenheim is a master. There is something going on every second.

MORE thrills are to be found in "THE PURSUIT," by Frank Savile (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), the story of a youthful American millionaire with a ravishingly beautiful guardian, and of his kidnapping by Tangier felons, and of his rescue by the dashing Capt. John Aylmer of the British garrison at Gibraltar, and of Capt. Aylmer's heroic wooing of Mistress Claire, the guardian aforesaid, with the Messina earthquake as a background! You will not fall asleep over "THE PURSUIT." Another anti-soporific is "THE GIRL WHO WON," by Beth Ellis (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50), an electric tale of King William's time, in the course of which Capt. Douglas Tremayne has the very devil of a time winning and wooing the beautiful Elizabeth Laxley, and there is much dealing with Jacobins, highwaymen and other such pests, and the good King himself plays a star role. Yet another—and perhaps the best of them—is "WHEN LOVE CALLS MEN TO ARMS," by Stephen Chalmers (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50), a story of Scotland in the days following the destruction of the Armada, with a fascinating Spanish castaway as its heroine and Will Shaxper of the Bankside a shadowy figure in the background. Finally, there is "BLAZE DERRINGER," by Eugene P. Lyle, Jr. (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), the story of a red-haired and godless youth who is turned adrift by his father with \$5,000 in his pocket and has all sorts of O-Henrian adventures in the republic of Sylvanlitlan, beneath the tropical moon.

PROBLEMS OF YOUR GENERATION— by Daisy Dewey.

(*Arden Press*, \$1.00)

A slim book of vague New Thought nonsense.

HAPPY ISLAND— by Jennette Lee.

(*Century Co.*, \$1.00)

A new Uncle William book, as mellow as the first one.

POEMS—

by Ernest Powell.

(*Badger*, \$1.00)

Bad, Bad!

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

HERE we are again contemplating a fall and winter wardrobe when it seemed only yesterday that spring was with us. Time has a way of flying that makes even Hamilton's aeroplane records slow by comparison. Each season hurries on into the next, and it is only when we stop a moment to look back that we marvel at the number of novelties crowded into so short a space of time.

The past spring and summer season, however, was remarkable for comparatively few novelties and still fewer successes. We accepted and clung to a demurely modest peasant style of frock, short and girlishly simple (to the uninitiated); in fact, quite a new note of youthful charm pervaded everything.

So modest did we become that we veiled everything in sight, including our faces. This latter veiling revived the delightful Chantilly lace, which was immensely popular and used in every conceivable fashion. We tried and are still trying—vainly, I trust—to accustom ourselves to the very ugly so-called "hobble skirt," two yards around—or less if you dare. The Russian idea died a lingering death, gasping its last in linen suits and frocks. Coats were finally made shorter after a great deal of talk, and hats—well, anyone who can do justice to them in a few words has my unbounded admiration—I pass. Early in the season it looked as though they were going to be taller and narrower than ever, almost hiding the wearer. Then they became bigger and flatter than ever, and this week I saw some new ones that were such tiny affairs they reminded me of the polo bonnet of five or six seasons past. Flowers were much in use earlier,

but with the exception of wheat, field flowers and clematis, we have returned to plumes and aigrettes with *broderie anglaise* and a wonderful treatment of ribbon for simpler wear. I think that many of the hats trimmed with charming great soft ribbon loops and bows were the greatest successes of the season, their seeming simplicity being a snare and a delusion, for it takes an artist to create a hat of this sort—which fortunately kept them quite distinct and uncommon. There was hardly a hat but was faced underneath with satin, chiffon or something of the sort.

Chiffon and satin, especially black, were used for wraps almost to the exclusion of anything else. Shapeless affairs seemingly thrown together, but somehow or other graceful and oftentimes quite alluring as one caught a dim suggestion of the lines of the figure through the chiffon. The linings were mostly of chiffon, too, in beautiful, warm, rich tones, corals, royal blue, gold and empire green predominating.

We heard a lot about a certain old and familiar barnyard friend whom we honored with quite a formal name and brought out of the oblivion of the farm, but in spite of the beautiful color bearing his name and a thousand and one idiotic so-called "styles" built around him, we refused to take him seriously and the poor bird received quite a frost. There seems to be one due every season. Do you remember the sheath gowns? I suppose he's gone to join them in the retreat of the unsuccessful.

However, we are on the eve of another season, and this *demi-saison*, when one is tiring of the spring and summer modes and casting longing eyes toward the first

glimpse of fall and winter possibilities, which, even at the early date at which I am writing, are being shown to the inner circle, is just the time to grasp the salient points of these forerunners of what may or may not become the mode and adopt them to immediate use in the late summer wardrobe.

To be sure, a rather large proportion of the fashions which are launched tentatively by the mother houses abroad die a sad and sudden death before the season is well under way, for they are often tabooed by the woman who knows, and, after all, as an eminent French epigrammatist says, "it is not the philosophy of the modes but the psychology of the dressmaker we must study, and the psychology of the dressmaker is without exception the exigencies of commerce."

In plain English, the woman who wears the clothes really decides the fashion.

Fortunately we do not live in an age when one woman, like the Empress Eugenie, declares the mode and adopts it—all the other women trailing along after her in quite the accepted manner. Today, even Paquin, Jean Hallé, and the wonderful Callôt trio predict that such and such a favorite model of theirs is going to be the rage, and if the woman who buys puts the black cross of disfavor on it, the dressmakers know it is final and thank fortune that there is still a class of customers to whom the mere fact that this is Paul Poirét's newest creation (poor, much-abused term) is a guarantee of correctness.

It is the woman of individuality having the courage of her convictions, who is most successfully turned out, she whose strength of mind recognizes the suitability of a mode and selects it to the exclusion of the hundreds of others shown her. It is this very individuality so strong in the American woman of the better class that marks the twentieth century for the incoherency of its modes. The cultivation of the individual has always been a pet project of ours and is in a large measure responsible for this variety.

At the spring openings last season

Cheruit, Callôt and a few other houses launched the soft taffetas, trilly ruffled models and other "*robes de style*." They were charming, one has to admit, but the Parisian *mondaine* and the American, too, has become wedded to the straight silhouette and insists on at least suggesting the charming lines of her figure—so she passed the ruffles by, and in spite of all the rumors one heard of 1850 styles, we are still clinging to the narrow skirts and even encouraging the Empire lines once more.

A Moiré Season

They say that this is going to be another moiré season, and I can readily believe it. I feel about it much as some men do about a Democratic administration—it is about time for one—you know we have a moiré season every ten or fifteen years (no inference intended), and it is about due.

Paquin has already launched some charming suits, in fact they were almost plentiful, especially white ones, at the summer races in France, and one of the newer houses is showing some wraps, while no end of gowns show flounces and trimmings of moiré.

But like any revival it is never quite the same—only in frocks and frills, unlike life in general, the revival is frequently quite an improvement on the original. No doubt this will be a blow to the woman who has carefully treasured her moiré antique and now hopes to reap the benefit of her far-sightedness, for the moiré of this season is so soft and flexible as to be almost unrecognized—a triumph of the weavers' and dyers' art, so marvelously soft are the colorings. Otherwise I should be doubtful of its success, for we require a certain softness in all materials—even brocades and velvets.

The Charm of Chintz

I wonder if it is too late to speak of chintz? If there has been one success of the season it has surely been these old-fashioned hand-blocked patterns of *crêtonne*. It was used on everything—

even wraps and coats were made of it. (But although one of the biggest importers sanctions them, there is, to me, something of a I-am-here-behold-me flagrancy about an entire garment of this sort.) Accessories, tiny hats like inverted bowls, fascinating vests ornamented with bright metal buttons, are charming and a glimpse caught under a soft batiste frock suggests an old-timey quaintness that is most appealing. I do hope it will not be run to death—it does seem such a pity to see a charming fashion misused and spoiled by the multitudes.

One of the most original dressmaking establishments showed me some wonderful patterns they had just unearthed somewhere—printed from blocks over a hundred years old, they showed quite an Oriental influence, tiny beasts and birds sprinkled over the surface; and at this house they confided to me that they were going to use them on dinner and evening frocks. Can you imagine it? I couldn't, so I shall wait to see before I comment. However, this encouraged me, and induces me to tell you of two very lovely blouses one of the better class department stores is showing—and so reasonable, too.

Two Charming Blouses

They were made collarless with the seamless shoulder—seen on almost everything—sleeves a trifle below the elbow, edged like the neck with a net frill. The only trimming was a smart arrangement of self-covered buttons. One was a soft delft and white pattern; the other—I thought it splendid—was one of those rich Persian effects—reds, greens, blues and yellows on a white ground. Does it sound startling? It wasn't—merely an enlivening touch to a blue serge or a natural tussah suit. For traveling and any similar purpose that subjects a blouse to hard usage, these are admirable—newer than silk or chiffon, and so much more satisfactory than a white blouse, which almost invariably has a crumpled appearance at the end of a day's journey. Sometimes these waists are veiled with a dark-toned chiffon for, as I said, we are still veiling everything from hats

to slippers, and for early fall they are found to be quite popular—if they aren't run to death meantime.

Motors

You know it is not only the dress-makers, milliners and shopkeepers whose eyes are kept open for the very newest "wrinkle." Madame, herself, although she is still settled out of town for several months, is hardly too remote for an occasional trip in, as the terraces and summer gardens of the popular restaurants will bear witness. For Sherry's, the Knickerbocker, the Plaza and the like are far from deserted at the noon hour. With our ever-ready motors, it is quite a simple matter to be whisked into town, and once she is in, if only for a few hours, Madame is sure to be on the lookout for something new with which to replenish her wardrobe.

Flying

This is a wonderful age in which we live. We have hardly accustomed ourselves to the various devices and comforts of one mode of conveyance than behold, another appears on the horizon with perhaps greater and more far-reaching possibilities. Without doubt, Madame, who complains of the dust as she motors in, will avoid that ere long, to encounter new worries, as she flies to town next season. Then the milliners, modistes and the rest will have a new field to explore, for the *bonnets d'aviation*, etc., thus far shown, have been but interesting curiosities to most of us—tiny straws to tell us that the wind is surely in that direction and predicting that we may expect to become more deeply interested before long. I wouldn't be at all surprised if, between the time that I am writing and you are reading, an "American Airship Navigation Company" will have been formed with lines running from New York to Newport, Tuxedo, etc., and you'll wonder why I didn't mention the newest aviation apparel. Surely, we aren't going to let the Germans get much more of a start. However, we seem to be less

interested in dirigibles than in aeroplanes, so perhaps I can catch my breath before the line is in actual running order.

I have no doubt that the International Meet at Garden City in October, and the flights incidental to it, will bring out some ideas in women's costumes, for several women have already accompanied the bird men in their flights and more will undoubtedly do so, so enthusiastic are we becoming on the subject of flying.

Meantime it is interesting to contemplate the degrees of luxury attained by the motors in use at present. I speak especially of the bodies of the cars. The cars themselves are fast supplanting the railroads for short-distance traveling, and truly the limousines of many of them are veritable little staterooms, so complete are the furnishings. I do not refer to the freak affairs said to contain bathrooms and kitchenettes, but to the comfortable cushioned limousines in constant use in and around town, commodious and well arranged, from their tiny footstools to the attractive cut-glass flower holders. Many of them have the small portable dressing cases of leather which contain every toilet necessity in celluloid boxes, besides the glass bottles for tooth washes, etc. These cases are so arranged that they can be made to stand up like a dressing table when desired, which is a splendid advantage when touring. Then, too, we see attractive cellarettes which are bound to appeal to the male contingent. These are so proportioned that they go in the door of the limousine, rest between the windows and being only three or four feet tall do not obstruct the view. They are made of mahogany, and have removable glass trays, space for liquor bottles, thermos bottles, a beef jar, a chocolate pot, a coffee or teapot, and glasses for several different purposes, as well as cups.

A Becoming Motor Bonnet

Regarding the costume of the woman in the car, there is much to be said. Besides improving her car and her servants she has improved her own costume to no small extent, for the bare fact that she has just made a fifty-mile trip into town

is no longer any excuse for a lack in her grooming. Even at this season, when traveling in an open car, she is expected after a few moments in the dressing room to emerge as immaculate and dust-free as when the trip was started, and really, lunching in any of the smart restaurants, it is quite difficult to distinguish the woman who has motored in, once she has shed her veil, from the others of her party, who are perhaps in town at one of the hotels for a day or two of shopping and an opening night. Her hat may give one the clew, for it is often of the *cloche* shape, but this is misleading, for so many women find these little hats becoming and adopt them for traveling and morning wear with linen frocks. But perhaps she is merely stopping in town on her way through from Long Island to Tuxedo, and in that case she is possibly wearing a motor bonnet, which gives her away—I must tell you, before I go on, of one I saw the other day.

It was very comfortable, practical, and last, but not least, becoming, suggesting the demure poke of our grandmothers' days, but fitting close enough to the head to protect it from the wind. It had a self-colored veil fastened at one side to be worn over the face if desired. It was called the "Julia Sanderson" in honor of a very charming wearer, and was made in almost every shade and a variety of materials. I like the pongee and linen ones; in the latter case one can frequently match a frock or suit, as the linen used is the heavy basket weave in vogue at present—and in the pongee they are in keeping with the motor coats and dusters.

The shop at which these are sold also shows a very useful and novel trunk for touring. Unlike most, it is not intended for the back of the car, but to fit in the space under the front seat. It is in reality two trunks—one resting on top of the other. The under one is as long as the space under the seat and a little wider—extending out a trifle in the space between the front and rear seats. Upon this extension rests the upper trunk, being as long and as wide as the extension and as high as the back of the front seat, with a slanting top

which prevents it from obstructing either the view or the rear entrances and exits. A description hardly does justice to its compactness. It was made of patent leather and lined throughout with billiard cloth, insuring its wearing qualities.

But to return to motor costumes.

Motor Coats

The motor coat of today differs but slightly from those in general use for traveling. Can you remember when the term "motor coat" (I think it was "automobile coat," at that) called to mind a bulky garment utterly devoid of fit, making no pretense to beauty and relying for its success solely upon its ability to entirely cover the wearer (and incidentally, when accompanied by the ever present "automobile bonnet" and goggles to quite effectually disguise her). Thank heaven the day has passed when fashion countenances anything so ugly, and the coat in use at present achieves all its predecessor laid claim to and is besides a most attractive accessory. It is roomy and all enveloping and especially in the light-weight serges, tussahs and pongees in use at this season, it has most decided lines and is far from ungainly.

For the autumn we are going to see those blanket coats, a few of which were sold in the spring for steamer wear, again in use for motoring. These are quite distinct from the hideous shawl affairs with fringe at the bottom marked \$29.50 in any number of the cheap shops. The ones I refer to rely for their success on the absolute plainness of their cut and the beauty of the material. They hang straight and loose from the shoulder almost to the bottom of the gown, double-breasted, with absolutely no trimming. The outer surface of the blanket cloth—soft and woolly—is seen in dull browns, greens and blues, the lining showing beautiful rich plaids. Large pockets on either side add to its usefulness. Nothing can be in better taste or more sensible than a coat of this description, and its uses are manifold. The house that originally sponsored it is noted for the refined simplicity of its styles. Several of these coats are

being sold now for mountain use, for contrary to one's expectation, they are not heavy enough to be cumbersome, and assure the warmth needed at this season in the woods.

Speaking of woods reminds me of several things I must tell you about—the first is some fascinatingly homely furniture for bungalows—country houses and camps.

Torquay Furniture and Hungarian China

It is called Torquay (English) furniture. Much of its charm lies in the dignified plainness of its lines—removed just far enough from the ever present Mission to be a pleasant relief. It may be stained any desired tone. In the home in which I saw it they favored a lovely dull brown, which was a splendid background for the brilliant sofa cushions and hangings and far superior in my opinion to the greens one sees on every hand. Tables, odd garden seats and various well-designed chairs are shown as well as attractive window boxes and flower stands. I haven't seen anything I liked better this season, and oddly enough I discovered that its creators are the very same people who originated the Mission idea. The little shop at which it was bought is noted for its cottage furniture. One could spend hours in its quaint interior where so many oddities are to be found.

In the same home where I saw the furniture they are using the lovely Hungarian china so popular for camps and not to be despised for breakfast, informal luncheon or tea in a simple home. There is something most attractive and old-fashioned in the bright reds, blues and greens of the huge flowers scattered over its surface—they seem to suggest all kinds of "goodies."

A Practical Camp Bed

You have probably never been told to "pick up your bed and walk"—but if it ever does occur (and it has been known to happen in the best of regulated camps—when a hurried move was

contemplated), I do hope they will provide you with one of these telescope cot beds that I saw recently, for then it won't be half as bad as it sounds. They are truly almost magical—"now you see it and now you don't." I'm sure one would almost come out of a top hat—to compact are they when folded—and open they have a splendid arrangement of springs which adjusts itself automatically to any uneven surface—making them very comfortable. Truly they are a boon to the real camper who scorns a retinue of servants and guides and does the work himself.

For "Her"

Although this is not the wedding season—being about the only lull with the exception of Lent that we are allowed during the year—nevertheless, it is quite the accepted time, I believe, for becoming engaged, which induces me to mention something very odd and new in the line of rings—if rings interest you. It is called the "combination engagement ring" and is introduced by one of the leading shops. If you aren't going to announce the fact to the world just yet it is exactly the thing you want, for at first glance it looks like a very plain gold seal ring, but if you look closely you will see that the band is in reality three distinct rings—the upper and lower ones connecting with the seal, but the middle one being nothing more nor less than the wedding ring held by pressure between the outer rims. When the event comes off, the bride keeps this and the seal is turned over to the groom, which is rather thoughtful of them, for he is generally left rather in the lurch in the gift line, don't you think? This, however, provides quite handsomely for him.

Of course, in many cases, this doesn't let the engaged man off any easier. Often it is just a step to the real and proper engagement ring. I saw one of these recently which is being worn now by a prospective fall bride. She, like a great many girls, considered a solitaire the only thing fitting for the purpose, and the solitaire of today in no way resembles the plain, unadorned stone we ac-

customed ourselves to for so many years. The one I am going to tell you about was designed for the young girl who is wearing it, by a man who is a positive genius in his line, and whose designs are already the accepted mode among discerning people. The stone itself was square and cut in the new square pattern. The setting was of the most beautiful and delicate lace work of platinum inset with tiny diamonds, reminding me of nothing so much as delicate frost work, the clear depth and beauty of the center stone carrying out the idea of a frozen pool. If you must have a solitaire, designs like this reconcile you to the idea, but if there is a wider variety of choice, the novel and beautiful possibilities are almost endless.

The woman of today has her jewelry designed for her just as she has her gowns and hats. She no longer chooses from the display in the shops but gives her own ideas to the designer to work out, and when the piece is completed she has something unique and personal. The beauty of the work done by the man I speak of, who is connected with one of the leading firms in town, is that, unlike the delicate and beautiful work introduced by the French designers, and unfortunately so perishable, his is of an enduring quality that is the result of years of study and patience.

But to return to "Her." Perhaps you haven't arrived at the stage where you are considering rings, and would merely like to pave the way. Most men do have such an awful time puzzling their heads over a suitable gift for a girl. Flowers, books and candy seem so very impersonal and are so apt to be forgotten in a day or two, and there is so little else one is permitted to send that when I saw this new idea a day or so ago, I decided it would be just the thing to answer the purpose, especially at this season.

It was a charming crêtonne-covered box—a little smaller than a hat box—and oblong in shape. As the top lifted back, the front leaf dropped down and formed a blotter, and four drawers were discovered containing note paper in four sizes, from large correspondence to small note, or correspondence cards if

one wished. There was also a tiny compartment containing the ink well and another with the pen. When closed, the box showed a very splendid bird of paradise in front, but any suitable covering could be ordered, and as to the note paper, this same shop is showing the very handsomest and most artistic monograms I have seen anywhere. It struck me as I admired them that after all there is nothing new under the sun. These monograms were of the wonderful illuminating done so many centuries ago and only recently revived. The letters and their arrangement showed in the first place the very highest class of designing, and the colorings were so soft and harmonious it was difficult to make a choice. The work itself was so perfect I caught myself inspecting it more closely to be sure that it was really hand done. No matter how many dies a girl might have, something on this order would be sure to delight her. The idea of the box is also a splendid one for a guest room, that being, I believe, the original purpose intended for it by its sponsors. It can be refitted, of course, and when not in use is an attractive ornament in a room.

Some Silver Novelties

It is amusing—we have been imbibing of champagne for quite some time with no special ill effects—when suddenly we discover that it is absolutely essential to stir it quite vigorously before drinking to allow all the familiar bubbles to rise to the surface, and all the gases to escape. It was quite a familiar sight this past season to see forks being used for the purpose, but now an enterprising man about town, who is interested in a special brand of champagne, has had a "champagne stirrer" made for his pocket, and one of the largest silver-smiths has placed it on the market. It is of silver, much like a fountain pen in appearance when closed; when open, a loop formed of four crossed silver wires is used like a tiny egg beater. What next?

I saw in this shop a well-named "Necessary Set," a tiny silver book which when open discloses a small sup-

ply of black and white thread, pins, safety pins and a few invisible and larger hairpins, just the thing to carry on one's chatelaine or in one's bag.

A Time Saver

Another shop is showing a book about the same size that is a boon to the woman in a hurry, so it's bound to be a success. When open it shows a mirror on one side, an ivory pad and a pencil on the other, and between them a little pad with perforated sheets upon which are printed "Charge and send to," and below the name and address. This, of course, may be renewed. Just think, if one is blessed with a long and difficult name what energy and time is saved by this little device!

Two other novelties I saw recently, both on the breakfast table of a woman who prides herself on the perfection of her table appointments. The first was a round egg dish, resembling a bonbon or cake dish in shape with a handle running up from the center. It had six egg-shaped indentations for hard- or soft-boiled eggs. The second novelty was in reality two in one. It was a long, narrow, flat dish exactly the width of the block sugar in general use at present, the sugar arranged in a row, and in place of tiny matching tongs there was passed a combination sugar cutter and tongs, so if one wanted a block and a half, it was a simple matter to break one quite evenly.

Well Fitting Underwear

In these days, when the importance of "line" is realized, well-fitting underwear is a recognized necessity. For that reason many women keep a seamstress busy altering the underwear they buy. To the many others who cannot afford that luxury, it is a boon to find an establishment where one may order one's underclothes made to one's measure at no additional cost, from charming hand-embroidered real-lace trimmed garments to simple ones with a touch of hand embroidery and some fine tucks. These latter are ridiculously cheap, considering the fineness of the material and the beauty of the work. Another point

in their favor is that the work is all done by private seamstresses, which is appreciated by particular people who consider factory-made garments unsanitary.

A Stocking Novelty

In a shop devoted exclusively to hosiery and where the newest and best ideas in that line are most often found, I saw recently a wonderfully clever novelty which I immediately adopted and wish to recommend heartily: namely, a stocking with a double top or welt—two separate and distinct edges four inches apart, to which to fasten the supporters. You can readily see the many advantages—one which appealed to me especially, being the idea of lessening the strain which heretofore came in one place on the top welt of the stocking. It is in this case divided between the two hems and undoubtedly prolongs the life of the stocking. These may be had in almost all grades from inexpensive lisle to embroidered silk.

Speaking of silk, I must tell you of some very beautiful stockings I saw there displayed in a case. They had a diamond-shaped Chantilly lace inset which ran quite high, and in the medalion in the center a most wonderful peacock worked in the pattern of the lace, its tail feathers embroidered in black silk. It was a very artistic and beautiful example of a stocking.

Shoes

One of the leading bootmakers in town tells me that walking boots are to have a slightly broader toe this season—otherwise there is nothing especially new in view. We are wedded to the charming low-buckled models for dress and semidress. The buckles constantly grow more beautiful, cut steel being frequently more favored than rhinestones or silver, although the brilliants are more often seen on evening slippers. These latter are going to be embroidered and bead trimmed this winter and I have heard that Empire-green slippers are to be a fad for wear with black frocks, and I hope so, it is such

a smart color for accessories when everybody is not wearing it—in its off season.

A New Use for the Phonograph

I met a friend the other day at the studio of her singing teacher. As I came the teacher was giving her some parting advice as she donned her wraps, and I listened in amazement. Her teacher was telling her to practise a certain aria and said: "Sing it yourself—try to remember all I have told you, then listen to Melba. You will note the difference. Sing along with her, then try it again alone—you will acquire the method yourself, some."

I couldn't wait to get outside to ask my friend what in the world the woman was talking about, just as if Melba was obligingly quartered around the corner to be called upon at a moment's notice. She laughed at my question and explained that her teacher referred to the phonograph, which was in constant use, she said, by a great many students of singing who considered it an invaluable aid, for in spite of all their teacher was able to tell them there was nothing like an illustration of the point in question. And here Melba, Sembrich and all the great artists of the world were quite ready to illustrate it at a moment's notice. I was quite surprised to learn of this new use to which the phonograph was put. A few days later we dropped into the delightful showrooms where the records are for sale to get some new ones, to learn that there was something still newer in the phonograph line. The large machine to which we listened not only completely hid the record from view and absolutely obliterated the objectionable whirring sound caused by the needle, but it was equipped with a new device which, in the words of the man whose name and device are associated with the machines from one end of the globe to the other, is nothing more nor less than an equipment of "lungs"—a device of compressed air which comes as near breathing as anything artificial can, and virtually endows the machine with a pair of lungs, insuring a wonderfully lifelike result from the record that is almost uncanny.